

EON

THE OFFICIAL EVE-ONLINE MAGAZINE

ISSUE #006

US\$14.95

FANFEST 2006

WINTERBLINK REPORTS FROM THE
THIRD ANNUAL PLAYER GATHERING

TESTFLIGHT

WE TAKE THE NEW TIER-3
BATTLESHIPS OUT OF DRYDOCK

LOOK WHO'S WALKING

EVE FINDS ITS LEGS AT LAST

PROFILED

THE STAR FRACTION
MEINIR MUIREANN
ELLISA ANNASAN
FIRMUS IXION
DARTH SOLO

EVE
ONLINE

PLUS: OVEUR AND CLOVER INTERVIEWED • THE WHITE WOLF MERGER
E-ON AWARDS • NEW FICTION • GUIDES TO MISSIONS AND THE CCG



WINGMEN WANTED



The EVE: Revelations expansion introduced incredibly cool combat formations and organization options, including the ability to appoint that ever-important asset in any successful battle strategy: the wingman.

And who better to fill that role than your best buddy? The one who let you see his big sister naked when you were kids. The one who shares your enthusiasm for poorly dubbed Kung Fu movies, fine beer and great games.

Go to www.myeve.eve-online.com/buddy to send your friend — and potential wingman — a free 14-day Access Pass to EVE Online to begin your high adventure together today. The life he saves may be your own.

[HTTP://MYEVE.EVE-ONLINE.COM/BUDDY](http://MYEVE.EVE-ONLINE.COM/BUDDY)

VETO

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www.veto-corp.com

ANDREW
SISK



EON
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YOU WILL BE READING...



ARRS GRAZZNIC

Eats level 4 missions for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Level 3s are more of a snack



BODA KHAN

More card counting from the mistress of all things paper-play in the world of EVE



DIGITALCOMMUNIST

After six issues of loyal service, it's time to bid farewell to our most beloved pilot. Fly safe, DC



HERKO KERGHANS

Cold noodles? Welcome to the first E-ON Chronicle inspired by the contents of a fridge



ISTVAAN SHOGAATSU

Few people are more excited about having legs in EVE as much as this person



NYPHUR

The Mighty Nyph has been gathering berries to stave off winter. He is actually a squirrel



PAGUS III

Meeting Darth Solo this issue left our celebrity hack in an almost traumatised state



URBAN MONGRAL

E-ON's regular newshound gets his teeth stuck into a couple more EVE celebrities



WINTERBLINK

So in love with Iceland is WB, his clone contract brings him back to life in Reykjavik



YOSHITO SANDERS

A new face to the pages of E-ON and hopefully someone we'll see on a regular basis



HOSHI

Beware if Hoshi is on airport security – her probing skills are the stuff of legend



ZAPATERO

Zap was distraught to find a wedge of unused beer tokens when he returned from Fanfest

FEEL THE LOVE

Although rapidly disappearing into the mists of time, the most recent Fanfest seems to have a tenacious grip on the memory. More so this year than any previous, the Fanfest seemed to be much more about the people in attendance than the game they all came to celebrate. I went out to Iceland, as I had done on previous occasions, to see what CCP had in store for EVE over the coming year (since that's what the Press badge is for), and indeed much of this issue is devoted to what CCP chose to reveal (The White Wolf merger, Walking in Stations). But the most interesting and heartfelt account of those three days comes from Winterblink (who neglected to inform me he was there until we spoke on MSN after returning to our respective homelands). Through his personal Fanfest experiences (p14), we get some idea of what it meant to be there for dozens, if not hundreds, of attendees. In return, despite the anxiety some may feel that CCP might be turning into some ominous and nefarious corporate behemoth (which it still might be, time will tell), that there is reciprocal heartfelt affection between developer and community is a reaffirmation of just how unique and special EVE and its community is. By mid-way through the final night (at which point the tenacious grip on my own memory lessens) I recall seeing devs and players alike all slack-jawed in awe at who they were meeting. I also recall seeing pixies trying to weave flowers into my shoelaces before I fell into an oblivious drooling slumber at the hotel bar... but that's another story...

ZAPATERO



ONCE WE OVERCOME OUR FEAR OF BEING TINY, WE FIND OURSELVES ON THE THRESHOLD OF A VAST AND AWESOME UNIVERSE



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CCP merges with White Wolf, breaking news at 11. Plus, all the info on the upcoming E-ON Awards Ceremony

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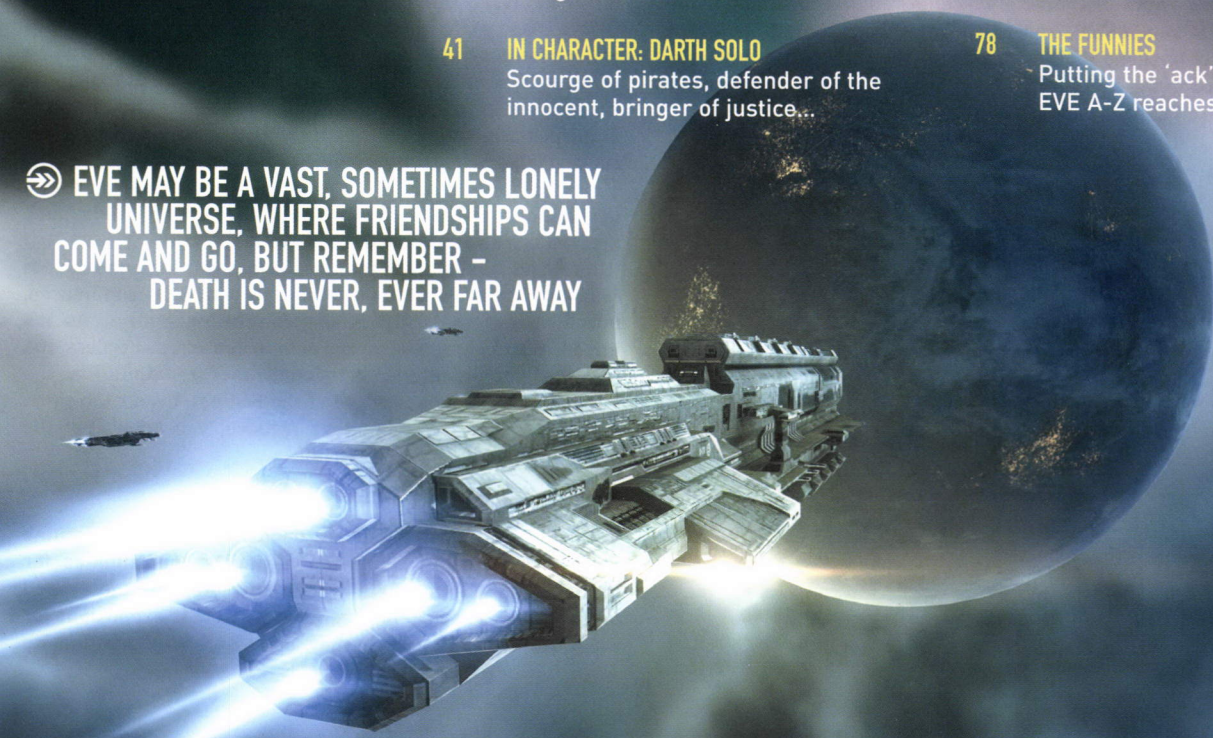
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⇒ EVE MAY BE A VAST, SOMETIMES LONELY UNIVERSE, WHERE FRIENDSHIPS CAN COME AND GO, BUT REMEMBER - DEATH IS NEVER, EVER FAR AWAY



CCP'S WORLD DOMINATION TOUR GROWS

» IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST BITE

Suspicions were aroused when it was revealed that, instead of opening the final day of Fanfest with his keynote speech and leaving all the big announcements to the likes of Oveur, CCP's CEO Hilmar V. Pétursson would actually be the one dropping bombshells. "It's my turn this year," he told E-ON a few weeks before.

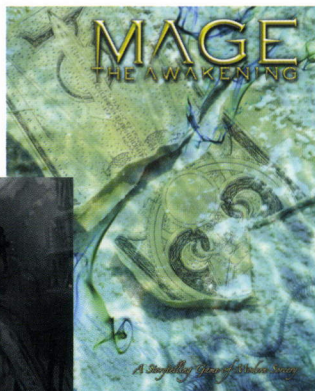
This meant that after seeing a technology demo of characters walking about (p28), and hearing of plans for Planetary Interaction (E-ON#005) earlier in the day, bigger news was to come.

As the time approached for Hilmar to take to the stage, ominous news filtered down from on high – that some kind of takeover was in the offing. Was CCP about to become EA Reykjavik? Surely not. In the eyes of delegates, CCP would've had to have rolled out some seriously large beer kegs to drown away that sorrow.

After anticipating the worst, that CCP was about to go from being a free-spirited MMOG buccaneer to being the remote outpost of some global conglomerate, the news that CCP would be merging with a company called White Wolf was a welcome relief. And it also helped explain the plethora of Vampire t-shirts being worn about the place.

"We literally finalised the deal very late on the previous day," says Hilmar. "Although the merger has been on the cards for months, even 24 hours before I gave my speech nothing was certain."

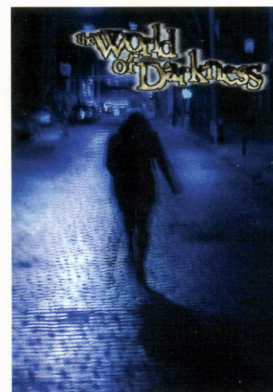
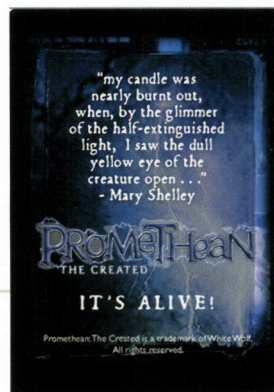
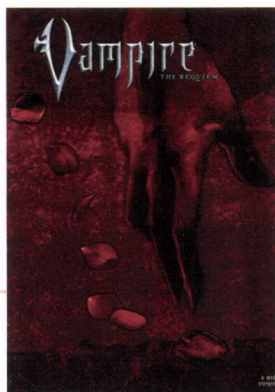
White Wolf has 20 years' experience of producing paper-based role-playing games, and was instrumental in the CCG development



SO SOFT AND SUPPLE...
I MUST REMEMBER TO ASK
HIM LATER WHAT BRAND OF
LOTION HE USES...



A kilted Hilmar welcomes White Wolf's President, Mike Tinney, to the stage at Fanfest, but assures the assembled throng that "the one wearing the skirt is in charge"



HUNGRY FOR THE WOLF

The relationship with White Wolf that has led to the merger began back in 2005 at the GenCon games expo in Indianapolis where CCP was looking for a partner to take on the collectable card game that was in development. It was at the E3 games show in May 2006 that the idea of a merger was first put forward. Clearly CCP has quite a thing for trade shows.

"We were actively looking to ramp up cash flow benefit generation concurrent to cost containment through leveraging of anecdotal information while facilitating collaboration, synergy and empowerment through decisive cross-pollination of the disparate disciplines with significant rigour in the wider context," says Hilmar, rather too earnestly. "No, really, business jargon aside, CCP is not on a mergers and acquisitions spree. I highly doubt that there exists such kindred spirits as CCP and White Wolf."

As to the details of the merger, Hilmar was kind enough not to bring out his calculator and bore us with facts and figures, but it's clear that CCP is the controlling entity: "As it's impossible to physically merge companies across borders, the technical implementation is to legally merge, with CCP as the surviving entity. As described at the Fanfest, I wear the skirt. If you have read William Ross Wallace, you know that the world is ruled by those in skirts!"

GOOD FOR EVE

With CCP in control of a team dedicated to creating offline role-playing worlds, there are obviously opportunities for brand expansion for EVE, with a role-playing ruleset and board game already being designed, as well as expansions for the CCG. But although it may be a serendipitous coming



together of cross-dressing lost souls, what effect will the merger have on EVE Online, the game?

"Remember, White Wolf has been building worlds for 20 years," says Hilmar, "and we have, through interaction with them, grown to appreciate more and more their disciplined and refined process of world creation. We computer game folk often get too tangled up in the mechanics and technology of making it work, so we sometimes overlook the meaningful content that can bring a world to life. There are so many under-developed opportunities in weaving in more colour to the tapestry of EVE Online, so we expect White Wolf to be able to use its skills in creating events, missions, extending the backstory and other macro-world developments."

DARKNESS ASCENDS

As for White Wolf, the opportunities are more obvious, especially when you consider that computer games are a growing market. To own the rights to some incredibly rich role-playing worlds, and then to suddenly have a large PC game manufacturing facility down the hall (figuratively speaking), you can begin to see what might ensue. Indeed, CCP has already mentioned its desire to create a *World of Darkness* MMOG, and of course much of the technology of EVE and the experience gained in making it will form a foundation for that game, although it's not known if the game will be made in Iceland, the US or China (since CCP Asia is also expanding).

"We will leverage our global infrastructure to the max for any MMO we make in the future. Our technology core will benefit immensely from being used for more than one game. Full-body characters inside the stations of EVE Online is a prime

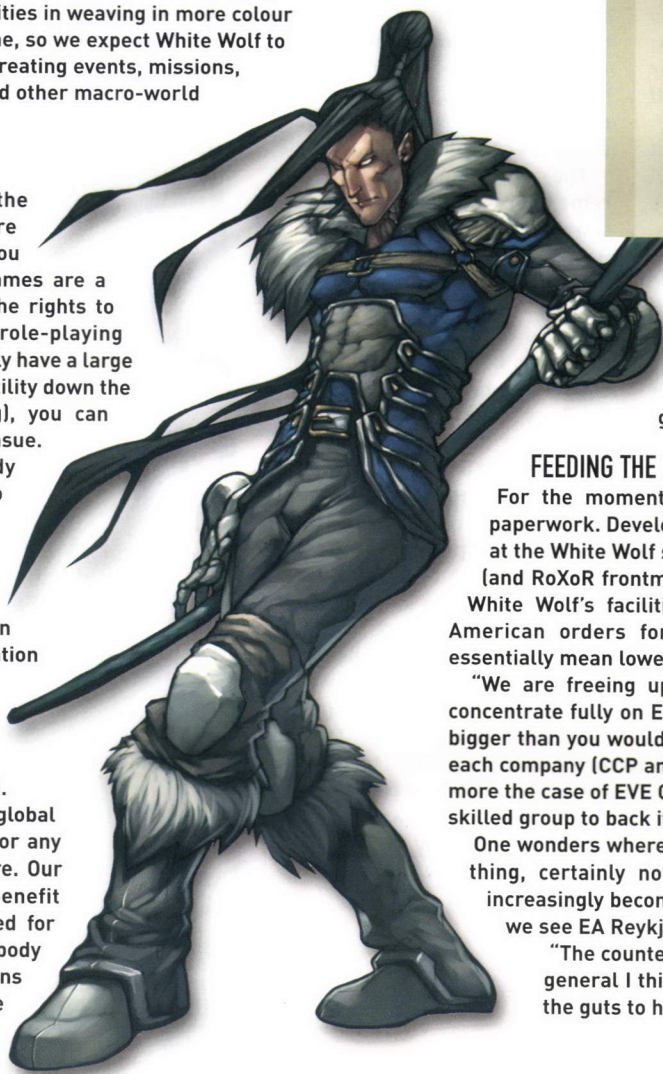
Vampire is one of the White Wolf brands which we are likely to see transferred to the role-playing screen, but not at EVE's expense

WHO IS WHITE WOLF?

Based in Atlanta, Georgia, White Wolf is the second largest developer of pen and paper role-playing, board and collectable card games in the world. Starting out as a magazine publisher in 1986, the company quickly found fame with games such as *Vampire* (which has been adapted twice for the PC), *Werewolf*, *Mage* and *Hunter*.

WHAT'S THE LINK WITH CCP?

When CCP was looking for a partner to help out with the CCG, White Wolf became a natural ally. Not only had it made CCGs of its own, but it had links with all the main hobby gaming shops in the US, meaning the EVE CCG had a ready-made retail outlet.



example of this. In general, we want to build out our platform from the direction of EVE Online. Halldór Fannar, our CTO, and myself feel very strongly about this. EVE players will get the goodies."

FEEDING THE FISH

For the moment, the merger has been mainly one of combining paperwork. Development of *The Second Genesis* CCG will continue, but at the White Wolf studio in Atlanta, Georgia – with the game's designer (and RoXoR frontman), Pétur Thorarinnsson, moving over from Iceland. White Wolf's facilities will also take over the running of the North American orders for merchandise from the EVE Store, which will essentially mean lower shipping costs for EVE fans in the US and Canada.

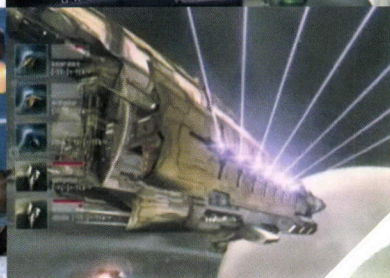
"We are freeing up resources as much as possible so that we can concentrate fully on EVE Online in Iceland. This is a subtle change but it's bigger than you would think. In the long term, as the groups that make up each company (CCP and White Wolf) start to blend together, it will become more the case of EVE Online benefiting from a stronger and more diversely skilled group to back it up."

One wonders where this will all lead. CCP expanding is certainly no bad thing, certainly not for EVE, but when companies get fatter, they increasingly become attractive propositions for even bigger fish. Might we see EA Reykjavik?

"The counter to that is becoming too big of a piece to swallow. In general I think we are much too rowdy for anyone to really have the guts to have us for lunch," assures Hilmar.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

AND LOTS OF IT - DURING THE 3RD ALLIANCE PVP TOURNAMENT



Despite thousands of viewers having to endure a morass of server issues on the first couple of days of broadcasting, EveTV's coverage of the third PvP Tournament that was held in December was nothing short of a success. Even with troubles (beyond its control) rearing their head from the beginning, peak viewers in the first hour were logged at close to 15,000, a 50% increase on the summer tournament, which is all the more impressive when you consider EVE itself registered two record-breaking PCU weekends as the Tournament itself was in progress.

If the broadcast will be remembered for its excellent level of production and entertaining and insightful commentary, the tournament itself is likely to pass into EVE legend, if only for the entertaining matches, some of which - on the evidence of the excessive caps usage in EveTV's IRC channel - had viewers screaming from the edge of whatever they happened to be sitting on at the time.

The rules were significantly changed for the tournament, with 68 alliance teams eligible to enter

Production values were impeccable, with expert opinion offered by players and Devs alike

and a 1bn ISK deposit levied to ensure they were on time for their fights. The most significant rule change, however, was the points system that ensured the variety of ships and setups were as diverse as possible.

The tournament will be remembered for many things - spiralJunkie's dress sense, Nebula Rasa's sportsmanship, Star Fraction's impressive showing against ASCN and, of course, the ultimate title of Alliance Champion being placed upon the collective brow of Band of Brothers, who have now won all three Alliance Championships. But the unofficial winner was really Cult of War, who in a tense bout against match favourites Interstellar Alcohol Conglomerate [IAC] managed to spectacularly bring down the Imperial Apocalypse of Tyrax Thorrk, a ship that had been confidently fielded in previous matches by a team that was considered to be one of the favourites in the whole competition. The Impoc, as it's known, is (or was) one of the rarest ships in the game (there is believed to be one other), worth far more than the 15 billion ISK it was ransomed for before it eventually exploded. Nathan 'Oveur' Richardsson, who was a guest expert on EveTV at the time, called it a significant moment in EVE's history.

Regardless of that one episode, the whole event was significant for many reasons. The good news is that further tournaments are being planned and EveTV will be back in commission to film them, and other events, later in the year.

EveTV's coverage of the third PvP Tournament saw peak concurrent viewers of 15,000, many of whom witnessed the destruction of the Impoc (right)

DEATH OF AN IMPOC

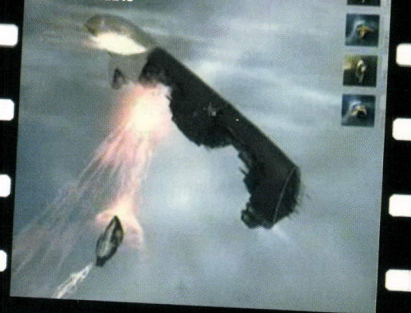
Can it hold out?



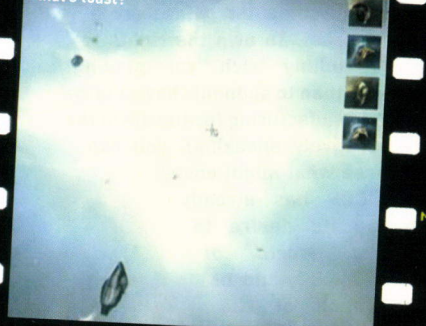
No, it can't



The silence before the inevitable



Dare we say, that's toast?



Yes, it really has gone



...EASY COME, EASY GO

TITANS ROLL OFF THE PRODUCTION LINE

Titans are simply the biggest, meanest, baddest things in the EVE Universe. Possessing a super-weapon capable of levelling fleets in a single shot and enough hit-points to tank an army, a Titan is a truly awesome sight to behold. It is also EVE's ultimate status symbol. It doesn't matter how many players are in your alliance, whether you hold numerous systems or have a ton of outposts. Until you get a Titan you're not a big-league player.

Like all the best status symbols, getting your own Titan will carry a truly insane price tag. The mineral costs alone require 3.7 billion units of Tritium, and more than a billion of the other types of minerals to construct the 7000 required capital ship components. To make those components requires 16 Blueprints with a combined value on the NPC market of roughly 97 Billion ISK. Once the capital components have been manufactured at a station it will take at least 3500 trips in an Industrial to transport them all out to the POS where the construction is taking place.

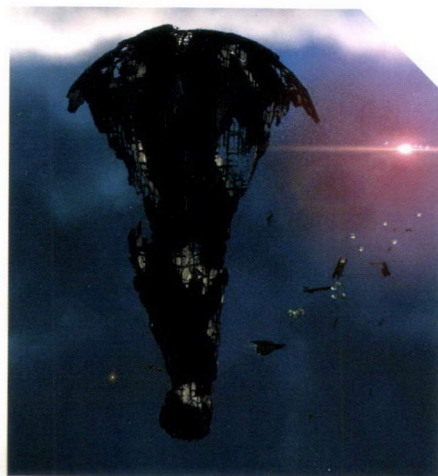
First to complete this mammoth

undertaking was Ascendant Frontier [ASCN] who unveiled its band new Avatar class Titan on 25th September 2006 and immediately threw it into battle against Band of Brothers. Clearly unhappy at being upstaged, BOB soon unveiled its very own Titan to further escalate the war. At the time of printing, the only other alliance to have gained entrance to the universe's most exclusive club has been Lotka Voltera.

Despite the views of Goonswarm (one of whom famously complained to the Dev panel at Fanfest that Titans were "not cost effective"), Titans really do give you a huge bang for your buck. Naturally, it can fit capital class weapons systems and it also has a not insubstantial drone capacity. A further measure of its capabilities is its total immunity to all forms of electronic warfare. However, Titans also carry the ultimate anti-blob tool – the awesomely powerful super-weapon which, once an hour, can launch a fireball capable of destroying anything smaller than a Dreadnought in one shot.

Indeed both the BOB and ASCN Titans have seen action in the brutal war which still continues to ravish the south east of the map. Their presence has caused the fleet commanders of both sides to modify their tactics to reduce the damage which one of these leviathans can cause to a fleet. The Lotka Voltera Titan has also been used in battle, performing on its maiden voyage the remarkable feat of destroying 217 Goonswarm ships in a single shot of its super-weapon.

Titans however are far from indestructible. Just like their real-life equivalent, the Japanese WW2 super-battleship Yamato, they are vulnerable to being taken out by swarms of smaller craft. Indeed this was proved when Band of Brothers destroyed ASCN's Titan in a mass pitched battle in C9N-CC. The massive wreck of this Behemoth will remain ingame perpetually as a mark of BOB's triumph and as an object to inspire future players. Indeed this monument has already become a bit of a tourist attraction for those hardy souls willing to brave the hazards of the Esoteria region, deep in 0.0.



CYVOK's Titan was the first to be built, and the first to be destroyed. Its ravaged hulk will remain as a monument in the system in which it was destroyed

WARP DRIVE ACTIVE

E-ON EDITION [C] M.LASTUCKA





OFFICIAL EVE ONLINE CHARTS

TOP 10 MOST DANGEROUS 'NULL SEC' SYSTEMS

(by number of kills over last three months)

SYSTEM	REGION
JQV5-9	Syndicate
Y5-G0P	Pure Blind
I3-2J0	Great Wildlands
UX3-N2	Catch
1P-VL2	Tribute
Z-6NQ6	Syndicate
G2E-RJ	Providence
TA-A7V	Syndicate
Q-PVMK	Great Wildlands
Z-6NQ6	Syndicate

TOP 10 MOST TRAVELLED SYSTEMS

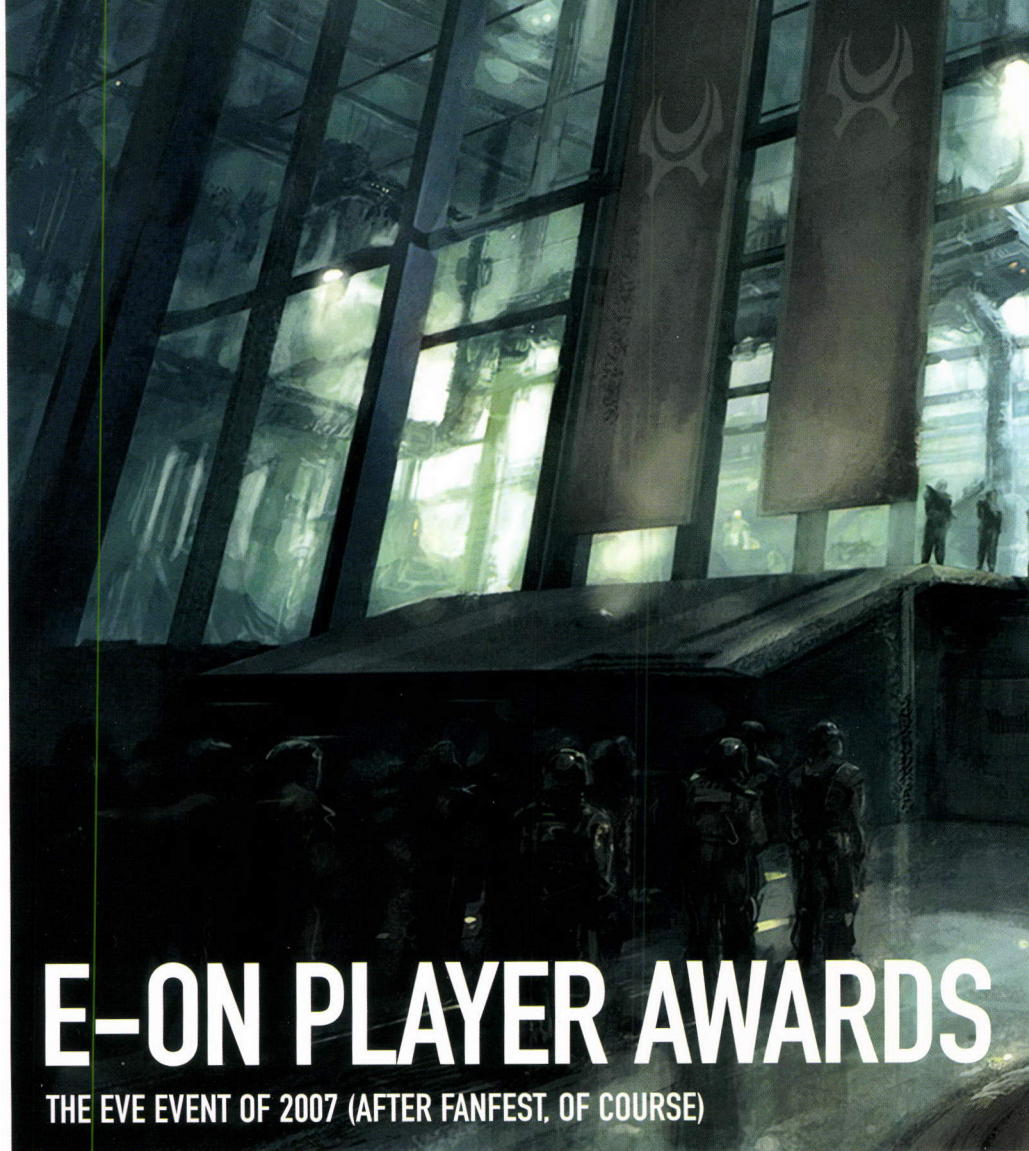
(by number of pilots in system at one time, over past three months)

SYSTEM	REGION
Jita	The Forge
Sobaseki	Lonetrek
Renyn	Essence
Urlen	The Forge
Ashab	Domain
Isanamo	Lonetrek
Juunigaishi	The Citadel
Amarr	Domain
Kisogo	The Forge
Uedama	The Citadel

TOP 10 MOST NOTORIOUS CORPORATIONS

(Avg. security rating of all members. Corp size >=25)

Serenity and Unicum Hungarian Corp
Free Corp
Nova Lusitania
Caldari Independent Navy Reserve
Neh'bu Kau Beh'Hude
Black-Sun
LFC
Lyrus Associates
Intergalactic Serenity
The Galactic Empire



E-ON PLAYER AWARDS

THE EVE EVENT OF 2007 (AFTER FANFEST, OF COURSE)

After threatening to conduct some online awards way back in the first issue, and after consuming a couple of beers during the Fanfest and discussing the matter further with CCP, we've decided to actually go ahead and host a full-blown, physical, awards ceremony – the first annual E-ON Player Awards, which will be held in London, England, on July 7th (date to be confirmed).

The event will be a ticket-only affair, at which attendees will be fed, watered and entertained, and where they will be able to witness the inaugural presentation of awards given out in a number of categories, ranging from corporation and alliance of the year, a community award for services beyond the call of duty and player of the year.

The actual award categories were being honed as we went to print. We're aiming to have up to 15 trophies – real ones the winners will be able to thrust aloft in triumphant jubilation, before blubbing during their acceptance speeches.

As for the nominations and voting, you should find a Dev Blog online; suffice to say that for each category, anyone owning an EVE subscription (not including trial account holders) will be eligible to nominate and vote. So if you have nine paid-up accounts, you'll be

TOP 10 MOST POPULAR SHIPS

#1 Raven



#2 Dominix



#3 Megathron



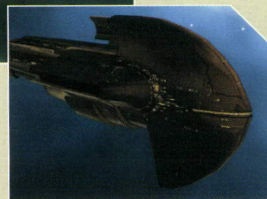
#4 Apocalypse



#5 Scorpion



#6 Armageddon





able to vote nine times. Nominations can be submitted via the E-ON page on the EVE website (www.eve-online.com/eon). On April 6th, when E-ON #007 is published, we'll announce the final shortlist nominations, which will basically be the most voted for in the previous round of voting. The second round of voting will then begin, with five or six possible candidates in each category. Final voting will end during May and of course the winners will be announced before a roomful of giggling EVE fans, at a secret London venue, with CCP guests in attendance and all topped off with loud music and beer.



ODE TO A TITAN

» NUTHIN' BUT A G THANG



Following the destruction of ASCN's Titan (see page 9), a roguish young rapper by the name of Nitro G created a catchy little tune celebrating the event called 'Cyno's Down' and posted it on the forums. The song has quickly become a major hit with the EVE community.

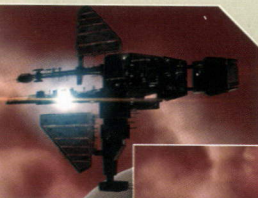
"I've been playing EVE for more than three years, and I've spent days freestyling about

EVE on TeamSpeak with my Huff Tech family and later on ventrilo with my new CELES buddies," he says. "I was working on my *Alo Genius* album (which is not based on EVE) when my good friend USA4 informed me of Cyvok's Titan's untimely demise. USA4 started freestyling about it and I went along with it – that's how the idea came about."

Nobody could accuse Nitro G of having anything other than impeccable timing, as he posted the completed song less than five hours after the end of the battle while the event was still fresh in everyone's mind. The reaction of the EVE community was universally positive, even from ASCN, which surprised the song's creator: "What touched me a great deal was when people said they love the tune even though they don't even like rap."

Nitro G has been inspired to start work on an EVE-based album called *Genesis 2 Revelations* which will be available in early 2007. To find out more about Nitro G and his music, go to www.myspace.com/alogenius.

#7 Tempest



#8 Typhoon



#9 Machariel



#10 Raven Navy Issue



E-ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Six issues in and we're thinking it's time to... re-think the way we do things around here, so from next issue we're going to be bringing in a few changes. The most obvious is going to be a classified advertising section, where we hope the smaller traders and operators in EVE can find a place to advertise their services. We're also going to let *you* interview the developers, with the questions *you* want to ask them. There will also be a couple of new faces, with EveTV expert, Farjung, climbing into DigitalCommunist's flight suit to be our new test pilot. Don't worry – the suit's been washed.

AND YET MORE AWARDS

EVE: The second Genesis CCG has been nominated for an award – the Best New CCG award at TCGplayer.com. EVE Online also seems to have found itself lined up for more Player's Choice awards at MMORPG.com, having been nominated again for various honours, including Best Graphics, Favourite PvE Experience, PvP, Story and Favourite Game – in fact, the only categories in which EVE wasn't included was Most Anticipated and Best New Game. The fools.



IN BRIEF



WIN! EVE 2ND ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP DVD

With the third Alliance PvP Tournament concluded and the subsequent EveTV broadcast successfully wrapped up, it seemed fitting to offer up a copy of the double-DVD package that was released back in November, highlighting the best action from last July's PvP event and compiled by the person just to your right. As an extra special treat, we also have spiralJunkie's unwashed bumblebee shirt... Actually, we don't, it went missing under mysterious circumstances shortly after transmission. Sorry.

TO WIN

In order to be in with a shout of winning the double DVD package, we'd like to hear your ideas as to what you'd like to see on EveTV in the future. Maybe a Big Brother-style show with 10 EVE players stuck in a station for six weeks? Or maybe some fly-on-the-wall documentary following the lives of those bad boys of CONCORD as they keep the space lanes free of degenerates? It can be anything your twisted mind can think of, you can just send us a few words, or you can write an entire storyboard and script. No porn though – believe us, we've covered all the bases already.

The rules: entries must be emailed to windvd@mmmpublishing.com by March 14th 2007. The Editor's decision is final in all matters. No cash alternatives. Responsibility cannot be accepted for lost or undelivered entries. Competition prohibited to employees of CCP, MMM Publishing or any affiliated companies.

LAST ISSUE'S WINNER

Congratulations to Dave Manning from London, UK who sent us some rather entertaining Top Trumps-style cards featuring some famous EVE faces. The Zapatero card was a bit unbalanced (a Charisma score of 100 is way out), but then flattery gets you everywhere in this business. Sadly we took the cards to the pub and Xicon spilt his pint on them (jealousy, probably – but as promised we'll be sending you both starter decks of the just-released EVE: The Second Genesis CCG, a box of boosters (to go with the booster pack with this magazine) and a signed framed card from the beta deck. Well done.



PRIVATE CHAT...



» Xyliana, the one time EVE-Radio DJ and party organiser, is now Director of EveTV, currently off-air – but not for too long, we suspect...

What's your role on the EveTV team and who else works with you?

I am the one that shouts at everyone apparently. I handle the structure of the broadcast and how everything will pull together visually. I also tend to lose hours of my life editing the pre-recorded material shown during the broadcast. My right hand man, Xod, who is the Lead Commentator and sound master, takes care of the business end. spiralJunkie is our lovable host and looks after community and PR. Hinik is our superb cameraman and also does some amazing special effects in editing. Also we have Loxyrider who has sort of shined through as a player who loves to edit and is the latest addition to our lovely team.

What's surprised you most about this kind of broadcasting?

During the first EveTV broadcast, I knew it was all going to come together, but I was clueless on the likely community response. I thought we'd hit 200-300 viewers' tops and I am still stunned that we topped over 10K. The one thing I can't get my head around is that I was just allowed to 'create' EveTV; CCP supports us 100%.

Is working 'live' as difficult as people say it is?

I think all the hard work pays off. Hinik and I make sure that the content is there, that the pre-recorded material adds to the broadcast and that we have a Plan B if, say, TQ goes down or a match is cancelled. At the same time we are luckily enough to have spiralJunkie and Xod who are very professional when it comes to creating content on the fly. There were countless times where I would ask spiralJunkie to extend studio time so that alliances could get ready. He just pulled it all together. Working live is exciting and keeps us all on our toes.

What do you get up to when not on air?

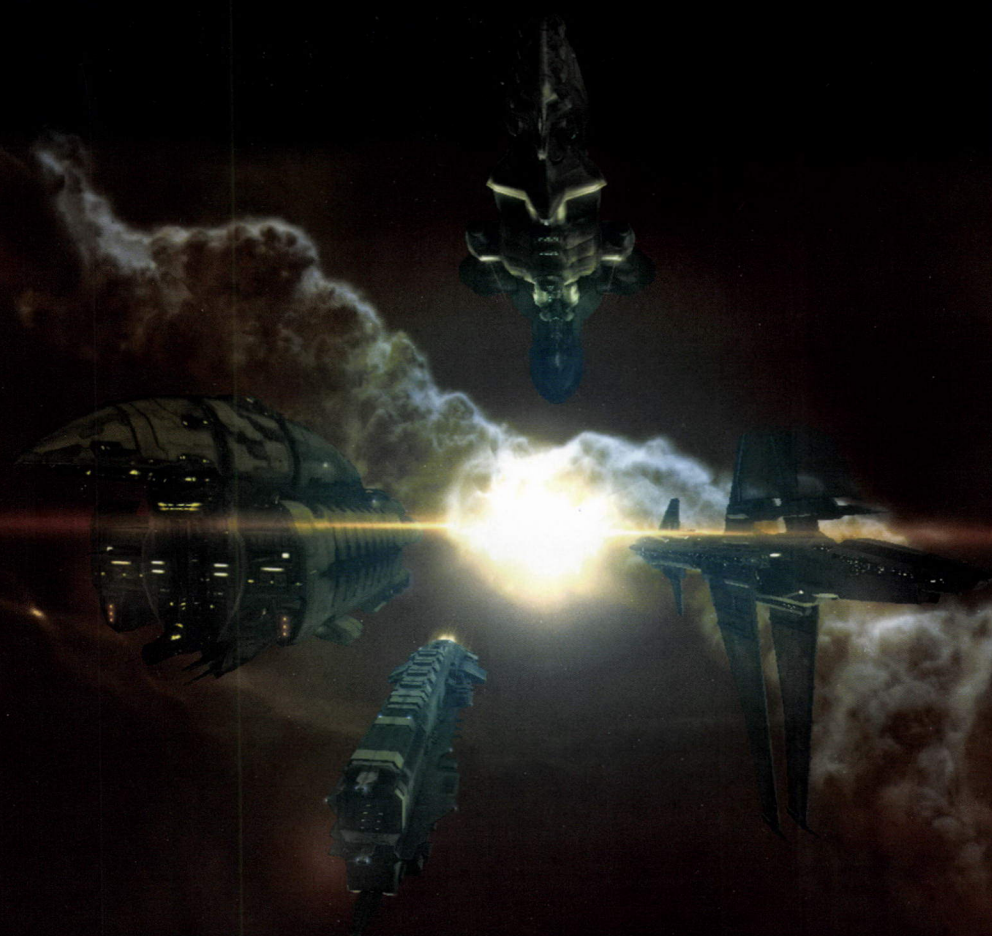
If you're referring to the time between broadcasts or the after-hours of a broadcast day... sleeping. And in between the long days of broadcasting, I am catching a quick nap whenever I can. The boys head out occasionally for drinks and downtime after heading up all the feedback on the forums. It's a busy, busy time before, after and in between broadcasts.

Radio DJ, or TV director – which do you prefer doing?

I feel as though I have been spoiled; the two things I enjoy the most in my life – working in television and playing EVE – have been combined, which has given me the chance to give something back to the game. I am sure the rest of the EveTV crew would agree with me – EveTV has been one of the best experiences of our lives.



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EVE FANFEST

9/10/11 NOVEMBER



TEXT: WINTERBLINK

He's the creator of Warp Drive Active, all-round good egg, and champion of the people. But did you know he has a TV the size of a small Scottish estate?

FOR SOME IT WAS ABOUT SEEING WHAT CCP HAD IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE OF EVE. FOR OTHERS IT WAS ABOUT MEETING FRIENDS, OLD AND NEW, AND SHARING A PASSION FOR BEER AND AMUSINGLY-SHAPED SPACESHIPS. FOR ONE PERSON ESPECIALLY, IT WAS ALL OF THE ABOVE AND MUCH MORE BESIDES...

☐ I was flying to another country to meet a bunch of total strangers and geek out about a video game. This, or some variation of it, is what people I know in 'real life' had been telling me in the weeks leading up to November 2006. These are people who do not play EVE Online, of course. Folks I know were curious why I was flying to Iceland, and as I tried to explain the game to them their eyes would glaze over with a kind of numb detachment. In the end, I wondered how I'd ever be able to explain the experience to anyone.

Many, many hours later I finally find myself standing on Icelandic soil (which there isn't a great deal of). Waiting at the baggage area for many minutes, two things dawned on me. First, I must be half asleep because I walked right past the two-meter-tall poster I had worked on for the arrivals area of the airport, meant to greet Fanfest attendees with a joke about lost luggage. Second, ironically, my luggage was nowhere to be found. Thanks Air Canada. Thanks for nothing.

After filing a claim with a rather attractive woman at the baggage desk and receiving a complimentary lost luggage travel kit (I love you, Icelandair), I travelled to the hotel with a bunch of media folks. Dana Massey from MMORPG.com was there, as well as a great guy from Warcry, and a man with whom I would clink beer glasses several times over the next few days – Monty Sharma, VP and founder of Vivox.

Eventually ending up at the wonderful Nordica – this year's Fanfest venue – I was informed by some attractive front desk girls (are there any unattractive people in Iceland?) that my room would not be ready for several hours. Missing a full day and having been up for a ridiculous number of hours, I was resigned to not sleeping for a little while longer. The hotel's buffet was open for breakfast, and we all decided to head there for a bite to eat, and to chat while we waited. Eventually my head hit a pillow and the world ceased to exist for a time.

GUILT-TRIPPING

The TV exploded into life three hours later, a flurry of foreign language totally annihilating a rather nice dream I was having. As I stood in my boxers looking out the window next to the strange bed with funny half-sheets and the TV chattering about things I would never understand, I gazed out in bleary wonder at the fascinating city laid before me. It looked a lot like a typical Canadian city would if you airburst an Ikea store about a mile overhead. Nice designs, everything orderly, and big bold lettering everywhere. Yep, still in Iceland.

Three hours later and I made my way downstairs, refreshed and ready for day one of Fanfest. It occurred to me suddenly, on this intended 'Meet & Greet' day, that I didn't have the foggiest idea what most of the guys in my corp, Mercenary Coalition, looked like and, to make matters more interesting, nobody knew I was going to be there.

Bless my soul, I come around the corner to see spiralJunkie and Xylina interviewing someone who could only be the formidable Hygelac, whose MSN picture is a suave shot of himself, shirtless. Patiently, I waited until he was done with his interview then, MWD on, I tackled him.

"Hey dude, what's up," I said.

"Hi, who the hell are you?", he asks.

"I'm in your corp," I said, grinning. "Winterblink."

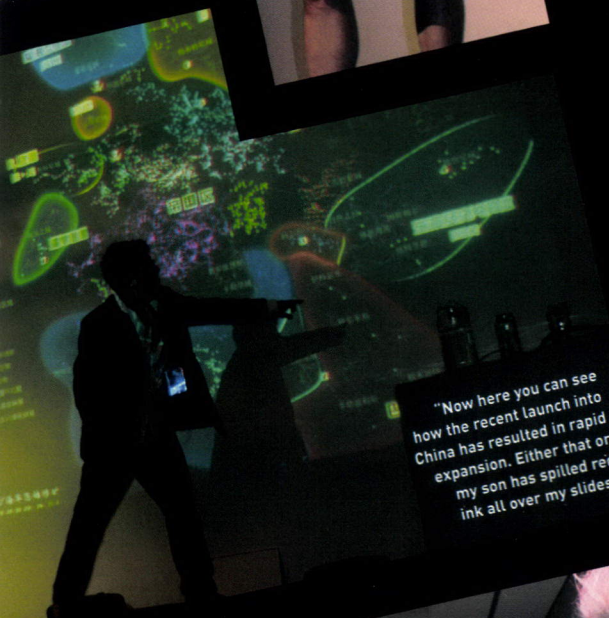
"Winterblink!" A look of ridiculous shock (should have had my camera ready, damn it), a pile of expletives, and one man-hug later, I'd



Some CCPeeps had taken to wearing kilts, one of whom was kieron. And a fine set of pins he has too, eh ladies?



The unmistakable profile of... George Lucas?



"Now here you can see how the recent launch into China has resulted in rapid expansion. Either that or my son has spilled red ink all over my slides"



Above: joyous scenes unfold as CCP declare the free bar has reopened for business

made contact with my first MC member.

The order of the day then became this: find new MC member, make them guess who the hell I was. Since I was fake-bitching about not going to Fanfest almost to the hour of my leaving home, I'd sufficiently guilt tripped everyone so much nobody even thought to guess the stranger accosting them was me.

DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

Let me tell you, meeting the people I've been playing with for months now and have come to entirely respect from their actions and chats, was great. Latex Mistress would remark to me later exactly how I felt: that it was damn great to finally meet, and it was like becoming instant friends with someone you'd maybe spoken to a handful of times.

It was also quite an experience to finally meet our illustrious CEO, Seleene. I have more respect for him than he probably knows, and finally being



Left: the roundtable developer chats were a big draw. This one was on the need for bigger round tables



able to shake his hand (even after being called names for not telling him I was coming) was a great moment for me. That, and he came with MC t-shirts, something I really appreciated given my luggage was still having a blast riding the luggage carousel in Boston.

There weren't a lot of developers present on day one, but it was great meeting folks like Elisabet, who seemed to be organizing everything under the sun, as well as Lilja, the beautiful angel who'd booked my flights, and Pann, recently reacquired by CCP.

Of special importance to me on the first day was finally meeting kieron. A man most will be familiar with from the forums. kieron's someone I've wanted to meet for a very, very long time, since we've had some experiences which we can both relate to. It was truly a heartening moment for me to finally meet the man and shake his hand. On the last day of Fanfest, the night before I was to fly back, he caught up with me and pulled me aside so we could talk for a while. He said a LOT, and I was honestly moved to tears. I won't repeat here what was said, but there was nothing I could say back to him to equal it, and it was a moment which is burned into my memory forever.

MC blobbed the hell out of not only the lobby of the Nordica, but the Mexican burger joint (in Iceland?) a block away. That poor waiter. His night was going so well, serving a couple here, and a small family there. Suddenly about 20 loud, hungry, foreign men burst through the door, start rearranging tables, and ordering 400-gram burgers and steaks. The totally random Icelandic weather destroyed our smooth composure on the way back to the hotel, changing from calm and misty when we got to the restaurant, to wind blowing so fast it felt as if a heavyweight boxer was punching you in the face.

Day one lasted forever, and I wish it could have lasted longer. My credit card might not agree with me on that, though.

GLADIATORS. ARE YOU RDY?

Day two, and a well-hatched breakfast plan was pulled off by members of the MC. Meanwhile the random Icelandic weather managed to delay my luggage until a later flight that afternoon.

This was the day of the tournaments, both PvP and CCG, as well as the developer roundtables. It might seem a bit silly to consider a whole day where people either went two-on-two with each other using supercharacters on Singularity, or one-on-one with EVE's new collectable card game, but the result was quite entertaining.

Folks who signed up for the PvP tournament were randomly paired, and faced off against other teams throughout the day until just two teams were left. The ship of the day seemed to be the Caracal, and it was interesting to watch the teams work together when fitting them out, some going with tried and trusted methods and others trying more unique setups.

While the battles raged in one half of the presentation hall, the other side of the partition had the CCG matches. Not being overly familiar with the card game it wasn't easy to follow what was going on, but it was interesting enough to give me the itch to learn more.

LIKE-MINDED SOULS

Meeting people like Xyliana - the heart and soul of EveTV - was another high point for me (that's me with her, above). She's someone who I felt was almost a kindred spirit in a way, who puts a lot of herself into what she does, for no other reason than because she loves the work. It was great that she was able to take time out of her busy schedule to chat with me.

The CCG finals went on before the PvP tournament finals, but the presentation of the game (on the big screens) was almost impossible to follow by anyone who didn't have an excellent knowledge of the game mechanics. Hopefully next year there'll be more commentary on what plays are being made by the players and how they matter to the game being played.

The PvP tournament crowd was so enthralled, they decided to put down their cunningly-fitted ships and duke it out with BattleBadgers. It was truly a fight which was epic in scale. Not to mention length...

During the final fight, all eyes were on the large screens as everyone watched with baited breath to see who would come out on top. Structure tanking (the only way real men tank) and a bit of good luck ended up being the defining factors as both ships blew away each others' shields and armour, and began gnawing at their insides. When the last ship on the losing team's side exploded, the collective cheers of the masses was utterly deafening.

Earlier in the day, during the first rounds of the tournament, the developers sat down with the players who signed up for the Developer's Roundtables. In essence, it gave players a unique opportunity to speak with them directly and comment on the game. It's another one of those perfect examples that shows how EVE's developers are real people (I poked one, it was made of actual physical mass) who are willing to sit down, look you in the eyes, and ask you to tell them what you think, positive or negative. It's a rare thing.

All of this also meant a lot of developers were just wandering about, so Winterblink Fanfest Plan Alpha was put into action: meet CCP.

PLAN ALPHA ONE, EXECUTE

Now this deserves special attention, so bear with me. I've been playing this game a long time. Like, since the beta. Most people who know my name know me as the guy who does Warp Drive Active, the comic that graces this magazine. One of the things that

IT'S ONE OF THOSE PERFECT EXAMPLES THAT SHOWS HOW EVE'S DEVELOPERS ARE REAL PEOPLE (I POKED ONE, IT WAS MADE OF ACTUAL PHYSICAL MASS)



Left: "Now, what are all these spaceship things?" The PvP championship gets off to a flying start

Below: guess who won the QA versus Content PvP match?

was utterly amazing – like mind-blowing amazing – was the reactions I would get when I went and talked to the developers, finding out who they were and what they did, and thanking them for making a game that is so inspiring to me. More than that, it was to let them know that the work they've done, both technical and in the community of the game, has touched so many from all over the world. Some might label me a fanboy for that, but hey, that's fine, go right ahead. Just do me a favour and call me a fanman.

But when I talk about the reactions I got, I should first tell you what I was expecting. At best, I was hoping for a handshake, a pat on the back and some chitchat. That's not to say I thought of these people badly, just that in my mind I guess I didn't consider the widespread effect WDA has had in not only the community, but also within CCP.

And so, late on day two, I found myself standing in front of a blonde dev with glasses, whom I recognized from earlier in the tournament (MC ftw!) when he was demonstrating something on some terminals I couldn't see. I went up, drink in hand, asked him who he was and what he does. He mentions his in-game name and it turns out I'm talking with the fellow responsible for the New Player Experience, a man named Rúnar, or Skellibjalla in-game (if I remember correctly... that wasn't the first beer of the night in my hand). We chat for a bit and he asks who I am, so I tell him I'm Winterblink.

Cue sound of record scrrrrrratching to a halt.

"Winterblink? Warp Drive Active!!!" All composure lost, I'm suddenly hand-shaked and man-hugged and totally beside myself with amazement at this. He runs off and grabs someone else.


"Holy shit, you're Hilmar!" I say.

"Hilmar, do you know who this is?" Rúnar asks. Hilmar doesn't, and I'm not surprised by that one bit. I mean... *it's HILMAR!* My jaw was probably hanging open.

Rúnar tells him and all bets are off. Suddenly I'm in what can only be described as a Viking bearhug, and I can feel my vertebrae and shoulder blades being pressed in directions they're not supposed to go. My mind fragments into two and retreats to a quiet room for a moment to have a quick discussion about whether this is actually happening, decides it is, and promptly snaps back to reality.

And this being the perfect moment, I get to tell THE MAN how much I love the game, and to thank him for making it. It's a moment I'll honestly never forget.

WARP DRIVE INACTIVE

Nursing a four-alarm hangover on day three (God, who wasn't?), I managed to get downstairs in time for breakfast and staggered my way in for the big day of presentations. There was some great stuff shown, 



NEXT ROUND'S ON ME

After the presentations, the top guys sat at a table on the stage and invited questions from the audience. They looked thirsty (especially Oveur), so I decided to buy them a round of premium pints from the bar. Can't have their voices going out on them while they did all that answering. Cheers fellas, you deserve it!



Relegated to a mid-afternoon slot, Oveur points forlornly to the bar area

including real-time demonstrations of EVE's developer tools and previews of the new engine. We also got some sneak peeks at things a lot further down the road, such as walking in stations (see page 28).

For all the awesome information and events that went on during Fanfest, the main things for me were meeting everyone I could, including the people at CCP, the fine folks at MC, and the players who took the time out of their lives to show up in Iceland. That last point is something I'd like to highlight to the people at CCP.

I'm firmly of the opinion that they have created more than just a game, but a community. That sounds as if I'm stating the obvious, but people don't fly thousands of miles to show up for a weekend for nothing. I've met people in EVE that I'd consider friends, and there's not a single person from CCP or MC that I wouldn't put up in my house if they came to visit (just not all at once). Back when I had a car accident, CCP mailed me a signed Get Well card with one of those gorgeous EVE poster prints. I've never heard of any developer of a game who's done that for a player, ever. It's inspiring. I'd never considered doing anything creative for a game community before playing EVE, and I've done WDA, Nature Vraie, comics and write-ups for E-ON, and I still don't think I do enough. *(If you did them quicker it would help - Ed.)*

PRICELESS

On the plane ride home, I felt as if pieces of me were left behind. Returning to my regular life was difficult in a way, because I had no idea how I could put the experience into words to explain how special it was. Most people I know aren't gamers, so the idea of playing one game for years is utterly beyond them. Say you're back from a Fanfest in Iceland and they look at you as if you've just sprouted a second head.

But the reactions I get from folks back home is interesting. It ranges from people poking fun and thinking it's totally lame, to people wondering just who the hell I am, since it sounds as if I'm leading a double life or

something. In a way that's quite true. There's a distinct part of my life that's tough to communicate to people who don't play EVE, and I'm sure I'm not alone in the feeling of being almost depressed at getting home finally, returning to the normal routine.

On the flipside however, going to Fanfest and experiencing what I did, meeting everyone, drinking all that alcohol (hell, even signing peoples' stuff - which was very unexpected), I have to say it's recharged me in a way that's tough to describe. A few folks have said I'm a bit of a different person since coming back, and I'd have to agree.

So I raise a glass to you in thanks CCP, for organizing a phenomenal Fanfest this year. It was an experience which is incredibly hard to put into words, but was overwhelmingly enjoyable. See you all next year, and look out for that poster in Reykjavik airport's arrivals section about me winning the lottery. ☞



Left: Ásgeir Jón Ásgeirsson, one of CCP's principal artists, shows off his ship-design talents

"Now, evil, that is evil evil... is like regular evil but a bit more... well evil... yes?"



LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED

After everything was done and we were distracted by sandwiches and beers, the doors flew open on the tournament/presentation area and the big party started. The whole area was made into a dance club with incredible lighting, and music provided by RöXöR, the developer's band. It was an almost perfect way to close out the day, with everyone, player and developer alike, just chilling out and having a really great time.



An exhausted CTO reveals how the Trinity upgrade is coming along



Jack be
nimble,
Jack be
quick...



Jack
popped my ride
with his *crusader* ship!

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>>> HED-GP (CATCH)

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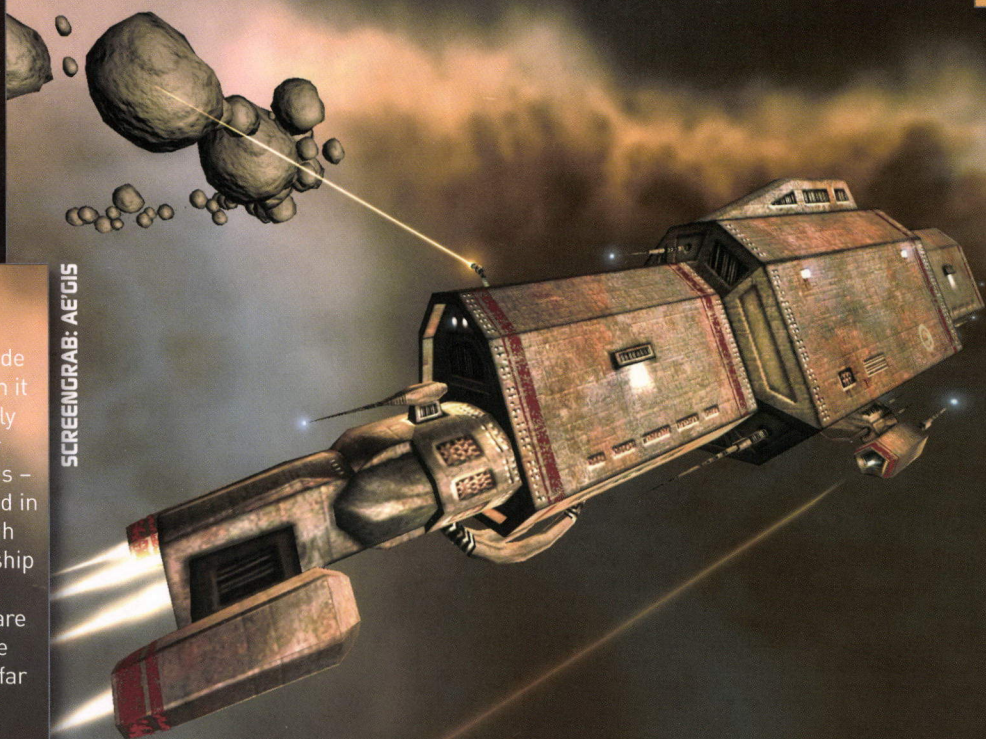
Unaware that he is being watched, a lone Badger commander orbits a low-grade asteroid, slowly drawing from it ore at a rate that would hardly be worthwhile were it not for the probability that the pilot is – figuratively at least – engaged in business elsewhere. Although there is a small chance the ship could be attacked, the joint Concord and Amarr patrols are so regular around the Throne Worlds that pirate activity is far from being a concern.

SCREENGRAB: AE'G'IS

>>> AMARR (DOMAIN)

SCREENGRAB: NYPHUR

Desperately trying to avoid pursuing gatecampers, a pilot warps close to a world teeming with life, for a moment alive to the possibility of what exists away from his self-imposed exile. In a system known as one of the most dangerous in EVE, most pod commanders would barely acknowledge that life exists anywhere else but in space.



>>> 'UNKNOWN' (CATCH)

One of the flagships of the Order of the Arrow fleet – the Limited Service Vehicle 'Profit Margin' – goes through its initial shakedown tests at OOTA's Starbase Alpha with other elements of the fleet looking on.

SCREENGRAB: MORTIMUS

>>> AUFAY (SING LAISON)

SCREENGRAB:
LEXX IDNLAN

Like some kind of interstellar moth, the vast bulk of a Dominix Battleship attempts to close in on the blazing heat of a system's sun. Whether on some scientific observation mission, making a brief stop to repair between battles or simply taking time out to appreciate the view, suns are popular waypoints for pod pilots, who, more than most, seem to appreciate the life-giving essence of a celestial body.

>>> 57M7-W (STAIN)

SCREENGRAB: RAZORDREAMZ

Outsmarted and outgunned, Sansha's forces fight a losing battle for dominance of the Stain region. Torpedoes blossom off this Sansha's hull as it attempts to flee the relentless onslaught that has already claimed hundreds of his brethren, and will claim many hundreds of thousands more before the week is out.



NATHAN RICHARDSSON

CCP STARTDATE: May 2004

POSITION: Senior Producer

AKA: 'Oveur'

Caldari AB 10 Ma
| AD 10M11 11
+ Caldari: Stock ticked
CraiL 1 LBPC
Contraband



#1
CROWD
IN

AND WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING..?

What are you listening to?

I have a broad (read: strange) musical taste. I'm listening to Vitalic right now. Depeche Mode was just before that. Pendulum was also there. I like Bad Plus, which is jazz, as well as Sepultura and Slipknot. Depends on my mood, I guess. There's Cypress Hill, Alphaville, and some new Robyn here as well. Klute. Classic and local stuff like Gus Gus and RealX. So yeah, all the signs of insanity in my music library... and now a-ha has just started...

And your favourite movies?

Besides the usual stuff like *Blade Runner*? *Event Horizon* worked for me, all kinds of sci-fi does, even bad sci-fi is worth watching, like *Starship Troopers 2*. I actually have similar tastes with movies as with music – everything from *Lord of the Rings* to *City of Lost Children*, *The Last Samurai* to *Armageddon* (I know, I know). But I really like underground hits too, like *Night Watch* and *Cashern*.

You must've enjoyed a few games?

Having played a lot of games early on that had a big impact on my life, I'd name *X-Wing*, *Master of Orion*, *Day of the Tentacle*, *Syndicate* and *Dune 2*. They cost me school credits. Later it was competitive *Quake*, *Baldur's Gate*, *Fallout* and *HoMM* – but I always end up in *Civilization* again.

One word. Beer?

My general rule is to go for local beer, preferably on tap 'cause it's usually fresh. So Thule and Gull is often consumed since I'm most often locally in Iceland. For bottled beers Leffe, Guinness, Harpoons, Sapporo and Tiger all come instantly to mind.

If you had to have a drink with a colourful umbrella in, what would it be?
Drinks shouldn't have umbrellas unless they're in a coconut and you are naked on a sunny beach (in which case you have far more important things to worry about). Outside that, I'd go for the Vodka Martini. At least I could hook it into the olive to eat it.

HE DRINKS THE MOST BEER, GETS THE MOST STRESSED, AND APPARENTLY HAS A TITAN IN HIS UNDERPANTS. MEET THE ONE-TIME SUIT-WEARING, POTTY-MOUTHED ICELANDIC TELECOM MOGUL AND LATTER-DAY SEXY BEAST OF CCP

Being a producer I guess your role is to keep the ambitions of the designers in check?

Well, yes and no – it's a bit of both. There are certain times, like in the concept phases, where we brainstorm. It's about encouraging ambitions and creativity, while in the latter phases it's making sure they stick to what everyone designed and what was approved.

There's also a lot of strategy involved in production, setting the general course, determining what's in the releases, resource management and such. You always have a devil and an angel on your shoulders, dragging you between the creative side and the management side. So yeah, it's not easy, but I'm not complaining. It's real fun to take on challenges like that.

Are you the most stressed person at CCP?

I'm probably one of the most stressed people... but as to what stresses me most, I have no idea. If I did, I'd try to avoid that situation! Overall, I think I'm able to leverage it to my benefit. It keeps me on my toes. I'd say I'm more worried than stressed, mix that with some perfectionism and I'd say that's what drives my passion for EVE.

Chapter One of Revelations was released at the end of November; how did that go?

Quite well; it wasn't as intense a crunch as we had for Exodus. Eighty-hour weeks were quite common back then; now they're closer to 60 hours. We call that the last 'real' crunch because it's something we want to avoid – we got very burned out after Exodus. Now we're thinking longer ahead, planning many years in advance, trying to have a more sane release schedule, which should result in higher quality and more fun – for us and the players.

Revelations itself is also in pretty good shape. It's by far our biggest expansion to date, in terms of content, features and code and it had far more testing than the previous ones, too. Prior to release we were quite happy with it internally. Of course, there were issues that we'd liked to have spent more effort on, but there comes a time when we're doing more harm than good to the release and we have to remember not to over-engineer what we're doing.

We believe in staged deliveries, feedback cycles and iterative development. Now it's time to get the rest of Revelations out so we can start work on improving things based on solid feedback from the 150,000 people now using it all the time.

Without getting slushy, what do you really, truly, deep down think of those 150,000 people? Especially the pain the ass ones... the ones you usually end up employing?

It's a love/hate relationship, which I think is returned. We've ended up hiring a lot of opinionated players, even though we don't fully agree with them. But that's the key thing here; EVE was created with love and hate, and some players I hate to love, and others I love to hate, I guess! I think that's the continuing theme throughout EVE. Love the game, love the potential – hate that we're not at its full potential quite yet.

At the Fanfest you unveiled vague plans for the next 10 years of EVE – do you think you might be getting ahead of yourselves?

This touches on a lot of topics, assumes certain things and looks at other precedents to formulate that vision. For example, in the online gaming genre, we're seeing games surviving for that long. Although many of them have reached a plateau or are stagnating, they're still there. We believe that given continuous development throughout the years, EVE will continue to live on – stronger than ever. It's also part of the question, 'will there ever be an EVE 2?' The answer to that, today, is a big no.

The drive for making a sequel would be that we want to do something which we can't achieve within EVE already today. Currently, there simply isn't anything we see that can't happen within EVE, so why do a sequel? We can keep up with the technology trends – the challenge is to evolve the world. It's like, if we can achieve something by doing EVE 2, why can't we achieve it in EVE? And the answer is, there isn't anything we can't achieve in EVE (it's a crazy Icelandic attitude).

Do you ever wake up and wish you could work on a nice, simple Tetris clone?

No, something like that would be too limiting for me. I don't think I would be able to work with such a simple feature set for very long. But I do think about other games a lot. I've been playing games for a long time and there are often times when I see something cool I'd like to do.

Such as?

These days it's taking some of the 'traditional' concepts and applying persistent data to it, obviously being influenced by MMO games. But there is a lot of space between persistent data games like *Battlefield* versus a fully fledged MMO, and when that space starts to fill up, the lines will start to blur and people won't be talking about an 'online' element – it'll get more and more transparent to the gamer. Then it's a question of how you can leverage persistent data and 'online' to the advantage of the gameplay, not just so you can compare e-peens.

So, yeah, there is always something I'd like to do, simply because I like the type of game – be it an empire sim, RTS, team FPS or whatever. And I've played a lot of games, which is probably why I ended up here in the first place. It's part of the natural mindset of a gamer – you play stuff and you get ideas.

What sort of boss are you? If you were a junior designer, working under Nathan Richardsson, what would you think of him?

That he's a big fat drunken bastard... but cuddly. How the hell am I supposed to answer that question?

OK, let's try another angle... you've been thrown in swimming pools, made to wear make up, and posed with sex dolls – do you think your minions are trying to hint at something?

Yes, yes! There is something going on and, if anything, I think it's a show of affection. Either that or someone likes me to end up in sexy situations and has the hots for me. Mind you, I can be a sexy beast... with emphasis on the beast part, I guess.

If you weren't making EVE, would you play it?

To be honest, I thought I hit the jackpot when I started working at CCP. My wife couldn't complain anymore because it really was work (I had played out my 'it's research for Iceland Telecom' card). However, EVE is as demanding a mistress as she is seductive and I now end up spending all my time on test servers, so it wasn't really such a great deal for my EVE personas.

But yeah, definitely, if I wasn't at CCP I'd still be raining down fire, brimstone and *pew pew*'ing everything in sight – whoring the forums like I was getting paid for it and trying to turn the world upside down. Wait a second... ☒

➡ Impossible, the Maker be damned.

He had watched her cooking his favourite dish a thousand times, always humming one weird tune from her tribe as she gently stirred the bubbling pot, but both the humming and the cooking were beyond him, no matter how much he loved the food.

Perhaps that was her secret, Ukkoken sighed. Cooking and singing at the same time?

Aoris could boil the soft paste just right, not a heartbeat early or late; get the noodles from the water with a subtle turn of her wrist on the wooden spoon, then mixing briefly with the iced sauce so they would be "cold but not crunchy; not that a manufactured drone like yourself will ever be able to tell cool from cold, anyway," she would half joke.

"How can you not melt in your home islands back in Pator?" he had asked once while watching her. "I mean, that has to be a burning pool of magma for you to be happy!"

"Bah... what does ice know about warmth, anyway?" she chuckled. "Best place in the cluster! Lush forests covering even the scars the slaver scum left; eternal spring and summer everywhere, not a cold day in your life. That's Mioar! I'll drag your pale Deteis ass there someday, and you'll never want to leave."

"Sounds like hell if you ask me... I'd much rather visit the lands of your Sebiestor cousins. Now there you have Matari that have some clue of how winter should feel like!"

"Oh, is that so?" she sneered, eyes always on the pot, keeping the noodles from tangling. "Then perhaps a Sebiestor girl is what you would like, eh? All skinny and pale, hair straight like a steel plate, that would be the perfect match for your milky skin and watery eyes!"

His turn to chuckle, kissing her lightly in the back of her neck. "Nah... a tough dark-skinned Brutor girl, that's the only thing this pale tube boy will ever need."

+++

First time had been eventful, if not entirely romantic.

"Ha!" she had sneered to the rest of her Brutor crew, speaking heavily accented Caldari loud enough for Ukkoken's team to hear easily. "Look at those pale State lab freaks! All baked in the same oven, the whole lot. But I bet they believe themselves all tough Raata warriors, with their tight lips and their kitchen knives..."

Her commander, a Brutor half a head taller than the even the tallest Deteis, struck her in the shoulder so hard he sent her sprawling over the floor almost before Ukkoken's team managed to spring to their feet.

"Crew, sit down," said the Deteis captain, the only one who had remained in his chair. "I'm sure there is a proper explanation for this strange Brutor custom, bizarre as it may seem to us, and I'm sure there is no need for us to take offence from the tumbling lady's words." He stared at the Brutor commander and spoke in Matari. "Isn't that right, my fellow captain?"

"I apologize for the girl's outburst," said the Brutor in perfect Caldari, bowing slightly. "Young pups, right out of the Tech School. First trip to Jita and the State for them. Couldn't tell Ni-Kunni shit from Intaki ice-cream to save their lives, let alone behave according to proper Caldari protocol. Will you accept my apologies on their behalf?"

"Your young pups do not seem to need cultural training any more urgently than my sorry spring-legged excuse of a disciplined crew, who have not even managed to graduate yet," grinned the Deteis. "If I may be so direct, I was wondering... perhaps you would find it mutually beneficial to have your pups and my springs sit down at the same table and have some drinks together, so they would at least learn to tell Amarrian from Matari, and Gallente from Caldari?"

The Brutor commander said it would be both an honour and a pleasure and ordered his crew to mingle, growling that heads would be turned in excess of 360 degrees by his own hands should any Brutor pup fail to behave in front of their kind Caldari hosts. The Deteis ordered his team to make room and commented matter-of-factly that Deteis tongues would be slit should Deteis words prove too sharp towards their honoured guests. Brutor pups and Deteis springs sat together, grumbling low enough for necks and tongues to remain safe – a round of drinks ordered, consumed, and followed by another as the mood of both crews improved from gloomy to talkative to cheerful. The captains took turns to ensure drinks kept coming. The Deteis first officer asked if the

occasion would be proper for him to inquire about a Brutor myth he had once heard, the Brutor navigator answering they would be honoured to assist with any question about Matari lore their kind hosts may have. The Deteis first officer wondered if any Brutor present knew from where that fairy-tale about Brutors being able to outdrink Deteis came from, the Brutor commander answering that as far as he knew it was, in fact, a fact and no myth. The Deteis captain did not seem convinced and pointed out that, with all due respect for myth and tales, men of science such as pod-pilots and their crew should never trust on hearsay alone; the Brutor agreed wholeheartedly and offered to further the cause of science by funding an experiment right there and then. Refusing, the Deteis counter-offered to fund 50 per cent of the research costs himself.

"You're on!" exclaimed the Brutor, while the Deteis said "to yet another Caldari-Matari joint venture!" Several rounds were ordered and then several

more and at some point in the party, Ukkoken's memory stopped registering the events and he woke up with Aoris tangled by his side.

"For a mass-baked Caldari drone, you are rather well built, I'll give you that," she said after they caught their breath the evening following the drinking party.

He smiled and rubbed the small Lai Dai logo and serial number behind his left ear, but did not take the bait.

"Still..." she probed, "it must have been harsh as a child, yes? Being... manufactured? Growing with no parents, just the State?"

He shrugged. "Harsh? Sure, we lab-tube kids grow with the State as our collective parent. But we grow with hundreds of brothers to compensate, and save for luxury we have everything we need. Bear in mind that real orphans were common during our war with the Gallente; many of the old Caldari folk remember those days painfully clear, as they remember their loved ones that never left Caldari Prime, or never returned from the front. So... harsh, being created with no parents? What's harsher? To never have, or to have and lost?"

She stared at the ceiling for a long time.

"Besides," he said in a lighter tone, "the State is a loving mother that makes its lab-tube kids with prime raw material and top notch blueprints. Not a genetic disease to fear, and we die with all our teeth and hair still in place!"

"All prime ingredients!" she mocked his tone. "You sure?"

"Well... as our captains said, you just can't trust on hearsay. Shall we carry out another quality test?"

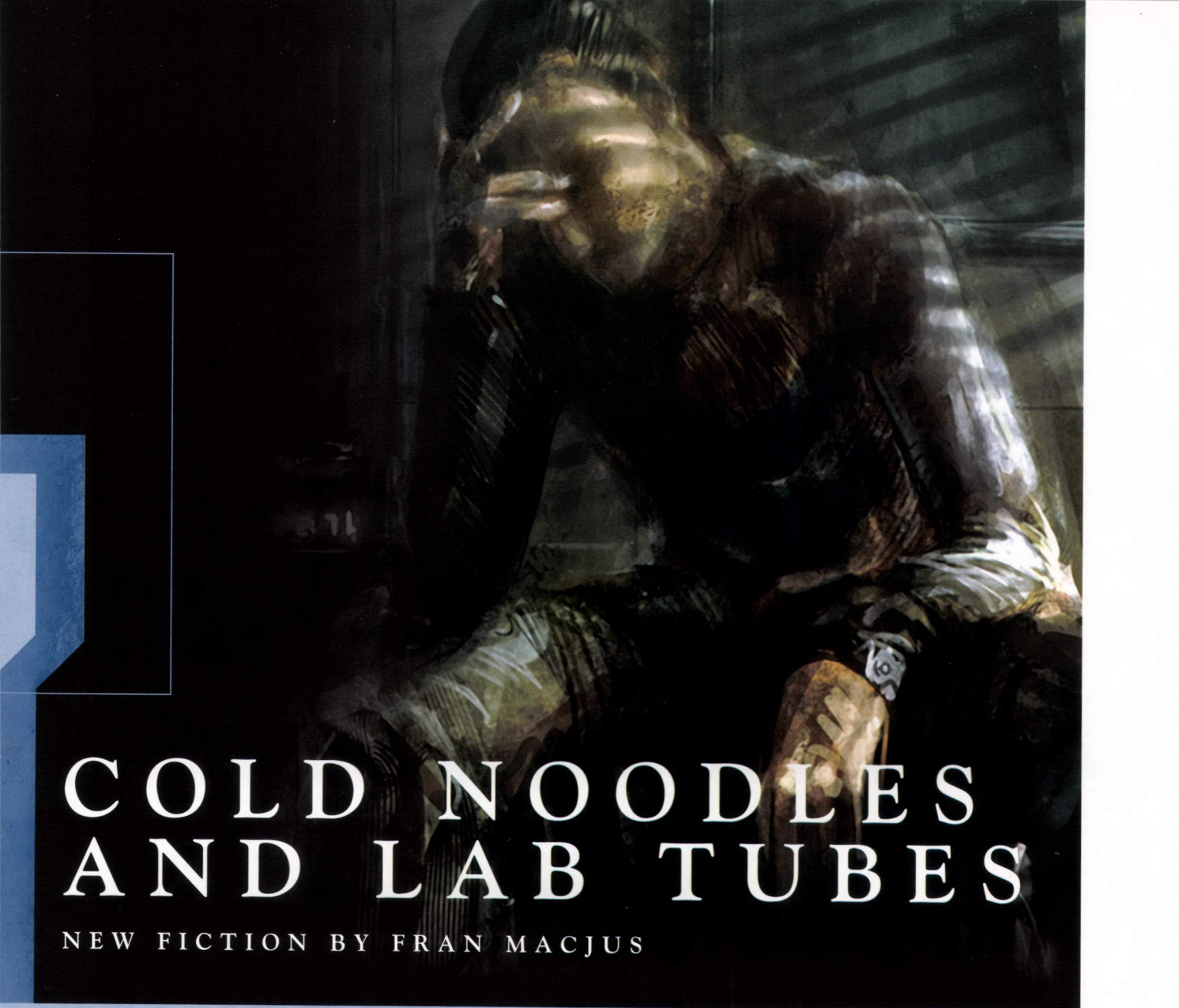
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Aheorai, or something like that, was the name of the dish. Not a word he could ever say right. Matari words for food were every bit as impossible to produce as the food itself.

"What's the deal with all those soft sounds in your

➡ More than Tempests and autocannons, it was the rustic drum that for generations kept playing at night in the Amarrian plantations

Illustration: B. Börkur Eiríksson



COLD NOODLES AND LAB TUBES

NEW FICTION BY FRAN MACJUS

tongue, anyway?" he had asked in frustration as the noodles once again failed to remain unbundled, one of the many times he dared defy the impossible and tried to cook the paste himself. "A warrior people like your kin, where are the slashes, the cuts, the edges in your language? Where are the war cries inherited from your ancestors? I cannot believe an army of seven-foot tall Brutors would charge into the battlefield yelling 'Mioar'. Where are the 'Haakkins!' and the 'Kaaizais!' in your tongue?"

"Slashes and cuts and edges – that's your people, not mine," she smiled as she threw the knot away, then poured another batch of fresh noodles into the steaming pot. "The song of winds and ice. That's Caldari, but not us. We are the children of lush forests and thunderstorms, war drums and heartbeats. That's me and my people, the beating of tight leather on wood."

"Don't tell me your ancestors fought their wars with drums..."

"It's the spirit that makes the warrior. Don't Caldari tales teach you this? The Amarrians learned that much, at least: countless years of submission will not douse a strong spirit. With enough courage, sticks and stones will beat laser gunfire." She poured the noodles from the pot into the sauce bowl and mixed gently. "More than Tempests and autocannons, it was the rustic drum that for generations kept playing at night in the Amarrian plantations that freed us from the shackles in the end."

He smiled. "Drums to set spirits aflame..."

"... and cold noodles to sooth them," she smiled back.

+++

They tried everything, sometimes dreaming of dark-skinned, larger-than-average Deteis kids, perhaps with somewhat curly hair. Other times dreaming of lightly-tanned Brutor kids with pale, watery eyes. It was not what fate had in store for them.

After three miscarriages, a small fortune in fertility drugs and treatments, and the fourth compatibility test saying the exact same thing as the first, Aoris could not take it anymore.

"It's impossible, Haioki," she sobbed. "Our bodies and souls are made for loving each other, but my Brutor womb and your State-designed seed do not seem to mix. You were right, my love: the harshest thing is to have lost."

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
Impossible.

It was obvious the moment he poked the noodles with the spoon: too soggy, the Maker be damned, boiled them too much.

He clenched his jaws slightly; it was just a small link in a long chain, and more were following. Taking the paste out of the water took him six or seven clumsy jerks; after mixing with the sauce, the sparkling crystals left no doubt. "Son of a Gallente whore, damn it! Too much ice again!"

Impossible.

He sat down and started to chew, cursing fate under his breath with every cold crunch. He did not try to hum her tribe's tune while he ate, staring at the empty chair in front of him. That would have been too much.

"Countless years of submission will not douse a strong spirit. With enough courage, sticks and stones will beat laser gunfire." 



WE'RE WATCHING YOU



GoonSwarm Intelligence Agency

ELLISA ANNASAN



PLAYER PROFILE

NAME:	Ellisa Annasan
CORPORATION:	Sharks With Frickin' Laser Beams [FRICK]
POSITION:	Gank Maiden
ALLIANCE:	Mercenary Coalition
SPECIALTY:	Disarming deception
SECURITY RATING:	-9.8
MOST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Where's the gin?"
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Oh please don't give me any more free ships and ISK, I have enough now."

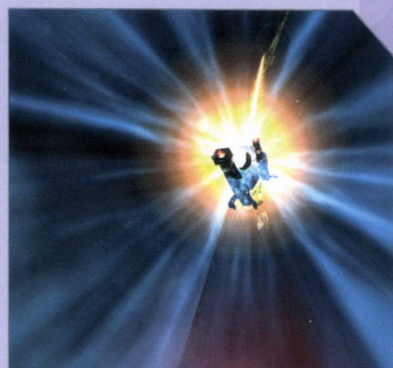


☐ "The female of the species is more deadly than the male," purrs Ellisa Annasan seductively across the table. Her deep blue Minmatar eyes sparkle like a box of diamonds dropped into an ocean. "You know that to be true, don't you?"

Cliché or not, the statement is certainly true in her case. Ellisa has been a pirate almost from the first day she took on the life of a pod pilot. Literally thousands of ships have disintegrated when locked and targeted by the long-range artillery of her Tempest. She puts the unusual career choice down to the influence of one of the galaxies most infamous and feared pirates, the legendry Frankinator.

"Oh, Frank is such a sweetie," she giggles, in an instant destroying the reputation of one of the galaxy's most reviled villains. "He taught me everything I know. When I first started flying, all I knew how to do was mine. He recruited me into Arcane Frankologies and showed me the art of piracy. It's certainly a lot more fun!"

Clearly not content with the damage she has already caused Frankinator's image, she leans across the table and softly whispers: "Want to know what I got him for his birthday?" She leans back and laughs.



Learning her trade from the legendary Frankinator (or 'Frankie'), Ellisa is an expert in 'tackling'

"My corpse! I gave him my corpse! Like most people learning the ropes of piracy, I started out as a tackler," she recalls. "After mining it was such a change in pace and so much more fun."

THROWING A BONE

Tackling is the exciting but dangerous pursuit where cheap and disposable ships (often flown by cheap and disposable pilots) warp scramble and stasis web target ships at close range while the big guns of the pirate fleet turn them into space dust. "I did that for a few months before I got the chance to pilot an artillery Tempest and I was hooked," she recalls.

After the break-up of Arcane Frankologies, Ellisa spent time in another pirate corporation, this time the worryingly named Corsets and Carebears [BDSM], before moving on to her current corp – Sharks with Frikin' Laser Beams. The Sharks, as they like to call themselves, are part of an alliance, which caused Ellisa a few concerns. "Like a lot of pirates I had never been part of an alliance and never planned to be part of one either. But when the alliance in question is the Mercenary Coalition... well, a girl is allowed to make an exception, isn't she?"

SPINNING THE WHEELS OF STEEL

You would think that a life filled with combat and adventure would be enough, but Ellisa has another string to her bow. She has been one of the star broadcasters on EVE-Radio for over a year, seducing the airwaves (and hoards of devoted listeners) with her sultry tones. In direct contrast however, her aggressive warrior nature clearly influences her choice of music, filled as it is with rage-filled Minmatar rock.

"Oh yes, being on EVE-Radio is very nice," she says. "My listeners love my show so much that they just can't help but

☑ My EVE-Radio listeners love my show so much that they just can't help but shower me with ISK and ships. I mean it would be so impolite to refuse such generous offers



Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, or in Ellisa's case a woman bored and looking for a spot of fun

shower me with ISK and ships. I mean it would be so impolite to refuse such generous offers. I had a few disputes with the ER managers in my time, though; some of them were a bit put off with some of my music for some reason. Still, with a little bit of debate they came around to my way of thinking, and I'm sure it had nothing to do with the fact that my Gank-a-Tempest had locked on to them."

GIRL ABOUT TOWN

There is one other weapon in Ellisa's arsenal. "I have so much to do these days," she sighs, "I really wouldn't be able to fit it all in without my jump clones, they really are a girl's best friend. Remember the days when traveling across the galaxy took hours? Imagine that! Now, thanks to my jump clones, I can travel from a fleet action in the depths of 0.0 to the EVE-Radio studios in Jita in seconds!"

She checks her watch and stands up. "Speaking of which, I have a hot date in the Yuli sector in about five minutes and I really need to get going." She flashes a smile and giggles. "I'm going to be dining with a senior officer from CONCORD. If only he knew what I get up to!" ☑



FEET STRETCH TEXT XEN'S EVE'S

FANCY STRETCHING YOUR LEGS BETWEEN LENGTHY TRADE RUNS? EVER WONDERED WHAT THE AIR SMELLS LIKE IN ALL THOSE STATIONS IN THE DEPTHS OF LOWSEC? NEED TO GO TO THE LOO BEFORE YOU UNDOCK? FEAR NOT, CCP IS ALREADY WORKING ON THE ANSWERS TO YOUR PRAYERS



TEXT: ZAPATERO

Below his significant midriff, the E-ON Editor is just a mess of slimy tentacles that carry their human torso silently down corridors and into board meetings. It looks creepy and it's damn hard to find a pair of trousers that fit

➡ An Amarrian, Gallente and Caldari pilot walk into a bar, order some drinks and sit down to talk about whether the attractive Matari lady across the smoke-filled room is really a woman or one of the many gender-confused inhabitants of EVE... OK, so it's not the funniest joke of all time (although it might be if she was packing a Titan), but then pub-crawling isn't something pod pilots have been used to, let alone the pondering of any character attributes below the waist. That's all about to change.

If there's one thing CCP is occasionally guilty of – especially around Fanfest time – it's getting all excited about a new gameplay idea, blurting it out to a room packed with fans, then sitting on it for a couple of years (planetary flight, anyone?). The latest obsession is an internal project called 'Ambulation' which, as attendees to the most recent Icelandic meet-up will recall, is basically about giving players the ability to get out of their gooey capsules, fit a couple of legs to their character portrait and swagger about in a manner befitting one of the ultra-elite of EVE society.

Of course walking about in games is nothing new. Pretty much every MMO on the market requires you to scoot from place to place on foot, collecting things and thwacking small mammals with blunt objects. Indeed, *Earth & Beyond*, a space-based MMO from which a fair few EVE players graduated, featured the ability to run around in stations, talk to people and fetch missions. In truth, although it was a unique feature, it was hardly a necessary one – indeed it was probably one of the most annoying aspects of that particular game. Nevertheless, when the inhabitants of *E&B* were told the game wouldn't be long for this world and moved over to EVE, questions naturally arose as to whether EVE's avatars would soon be able to saunter around agent's offices or see their ships being fitted out and repaired. It was a feature scoffed at by CCP at the time; 'EVE is a

⊕ space game' we were told, but in truth it was an aspect CCP has always wanted to include.

You only have to look at the current character-creation system which, three years on, remains one of the most detailed out there, even when compared to the latest full-body avatar-authoring systems seen in newer games. Even so, you can spend a couple of hours getting the face and lighting just right, and still all you end up with is a passport photo with a lazy eye.

"There are several man-years of work behind that stuff," says Torfi Frans Ólafsson, slightly affronted. CCP's Technical Producer is in charge of the Ambulation project, and was also responsible for character creation, among other facets of EVE Online. "The content for the character portrait constitutes a huge portion of the installed EVE files. We always hoped to do more with your character looks but, time, money and other constraints forced us to choose between the ships and the people, and at the time, putting more love into how space looked and behaved, was an obvious choice."

HEADSTAR

Two years after EA pulled the plug on *Earth & Beyond*, CCP clearly has the resources to pick up the baton, and whilst it doesn't intend to run with it (because it's of the opinion that running avatars look silly), it is walking in a most convincing way. Ólafsson's technical demonstration at Fanfest gave ample evidence that a lot of thought was being put into not just how avatars will look, but also how they will behave.

There's a perfectly good Dev Blog ('Walking in Stations', t0rfiFrans November 2006) that documents the challenges and the solutions being pondered, so we won't regurgitate things here, but the aim is to offer a level of realism that far exceeds any other game – online or off. We're talking about avatars that respond dynamically to the physical and social environment, so a noisy outburst in a quiet room will cause people to look, whilst in a crowded concourse people will be more focused on where they want to go. Some characters may cause heads to turn their way, but only if they are in a position of authority, a higher ranking official in a particular corp, or perhaps are famed throughout the EVE galaxy for some reason (a factor that could even be based on role-play forum posts).

There are countless other mannerisms being considered too. Maybe someone who's been logged in for four hours straight will become jittery, or boosters might have the same effect. Your facial expressions

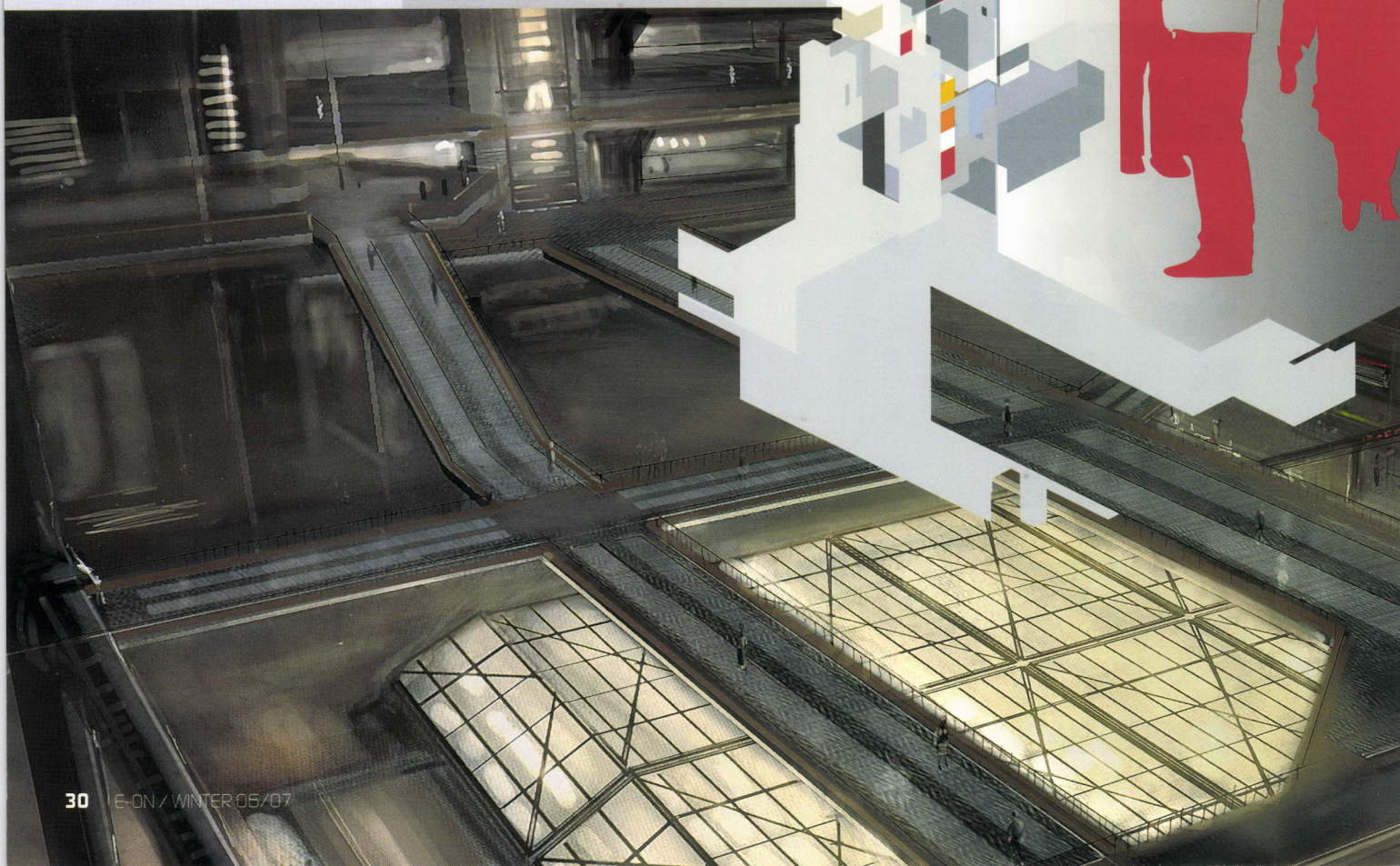
may change depending on who you are talking to, based on standings, or war declarations. The solution to this lies in motion-capture techniques adapted with dynamic avatar, human-to-human interaction, a research collaboration between CCP and two very accomplished MIT research scientists, Dr Kristinn R Thórisson and Dr. Hannes Högni Vilhjálmsson, from Reykjavik University. In short, CCP has wheeled out the big guns.

PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE

Assuming that Ambulation will look amazing, with flowing robes, plenty of cold stares and Gallente ladies bobbing along corridors wearing transparent Perspex dresses, what will be the gameplay benefits? Arguably for many people, part of EVE's appeal is that you are distant from other players. Outside of our eggs we are pretty much equal; there's no social reliance on frivolous clothing or foppish behavior. People would rather prove their worth in battle, or through the markets – or indeed the forums. That's fine, says CCP – Ambulation will be something you won't be forced to engage in – it will be something you can do if you wish. A good analogy would be the Fanfest. It's an event that's hardly necessary, but a lot of fun. Most who turn up are happy to be anonymous, others may promote themselves or their character. You may not know the real face of Tyrax Thorrr, but if you were at Fanfest you can't have failed to miss his hat. And in a few months he'll have a fine set of pins as well. (And you won't have to travel to Iceland to see them either.)

"Immersion would be the first benefit of this new system," says Ólafsson. "Few people who play EVE consider it a simple game. It's deep and complex, its world is huge and loaded with people and equipment and materials. It's quite real to a lot of us. The back story is rich and constantly being given more and more detail by our writers. I think it's important to allow people to literally soak themselves in the EVE universe and deepen that feeling that it truly exists."

There's a line that is often quoted on forums, that the player is not their ship. It's a fact that's hard to dismiss, but at the same time without their ship, very few players can claim to be a potent force in the EVE universe. If anything, the ability to mince gaily between agent offices and market floors will enforce the fact that pilots are indeed flesh, bone, and implants.



SOMETHING TO DO

One of the key objectives for walking about in stations is to not take away any of the functionality that we currently enjoy. In short, we won't be forced to get out of our pods in order to speak to our agents or refine ore – all that can still be taken care of from your own cocoon of life-enriching goo.

"The idea that we will destroy a perfectly good game just for added realism is far-fetched," says Ólafsson. "There's a clear design goal in this project; we will not disable or cripple any service already in the game that's accessible with a simple UI. Actions allowed in stations will augment what's already there, but never replace existing functionality." Which is good news, but also begs the question, why exit the pod if it's just to check out Tyrrix Thorrk's thighs?

"The first thing that comes to mind is that you can hold a corporation meeting," reveals Ólafsson. "Everybody sitting in the non-public area of the corporation office, voting on something, discussing strategy and looking at plans on a war-room-like screen. Then the classic race-related R&R, hanging at bars, praying at chapels, betting on fights between animals, machines or people, or prowling sleazy Gallente nightclubs. I'm sure Amarrians will find a way to organize a slave auction and Minmatars will have freedom rallies. I want it to be a sandbox for role-playing, basically. And from this the best actual event ideas will come from the players."

CCP concedes that the very first iteration of Ambulation might seem limiting, but plans are afoot (pun intended) to expand the idea past being a tool for role-players and those more conscious of their social standing.

"There's a fancy word for what we are trying to achieve – verisimilitude," says Ólafsson. "The allusion to realism provides depth for the casual player and a playground for those who take role-playing seriously. I come from a classic pen-and-paper role-playing background and feel that it's imperative that you have the option to perform actions and events that perhaps have no pragmatic economic value but enable people to convey emotion, power, tradition and history in the language of the EVE universe. Socialization is also a very important element of walking in stations, but it can't only be about that, because people are already socializing in game, in local chat, and other chat channels." ☺

Ⓢ THERE WILL BE NO HAIRY, BEARDED MEN IN WEDDING GOWNS. IT WOULDN'T FIT INTO THE BACK STORY AND SETTING OF EVE. NOT THAT WE'RE AGAINST CROSSDRESSING



BUMP AND GRIND

Assuming players won't be able to walk through each other (as ships can in space), one wonders how CCP will handle the problem of players walling each other into the corner of a room – which is sure to be an exploitable tactic given the inability to shank people in the kidneys.

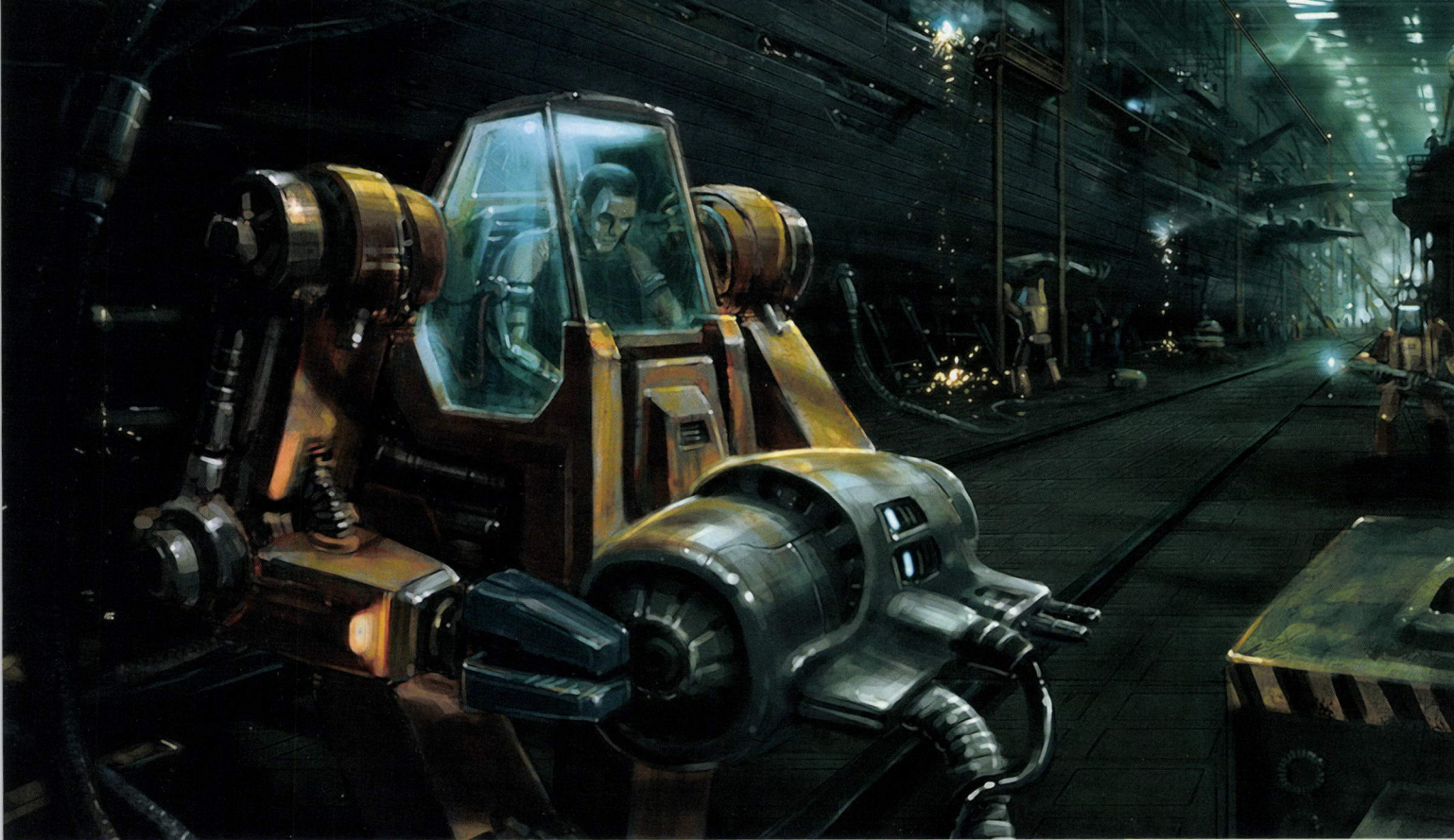
Ólafsson: "In reality it's quite difficult for a single person to wall another into a corner. Even a group of people has to make a determined effort to do so, as people sprint, squirm and wiggle their way out of such a situation quite easily. The system we've thought up has collision detection, but in a sense that you can almost always pass another person. If you go really close, you see an animation of them squeezing past each other, like you would on a crowded train or when navigating through a crowd at a rock concert."



WALKING IN MY SHOES

Everyone playing a game runs – especially if they're quipped with legs – it's the done thing. Lara Croft does it, Max Payne does it, *Doom* guy wouldn't survive without being able to run. The problem is that it often looks silly, at least it does when you have hyper-realistic characters in your game. To minimize silliness, CCP hopes to get around the problem of players trudging wearily from room to room by fitting stations with escalators, elevators and maybe even little golf-cart like cars: "Everything to keep travel times low inside stations, without the silly feeling of seeing several hundred people sprinting past you like a swarm of bees," says Ólafsson with a smile.

⇒ THE ABILITY TO MINCE GAILY BETWEEN OFFICES AND FLOORS WILL ENFORCE THE FACT THAT PILOTS ARE INDEED FLESH, BONE AND IMPLANTS



DRESSED IN BLACK

The obvious station areas will be implemented: agent offices (with realistic NPC suits sitting behind desks), trading areas combining NPC marketeers as well as player entrepreneurs, and possibly docking areas where you'll be able to see parked ships (hopefully with logos on them). But the most interesting areas to be built – and where CCP is directing its initial efforts – are with the more socially active zones, such as bars and corporate offices.

"Offices will be the first thing that we will develop for in-station activities," says Ólafsson. "Your corp will be able to rent an office of varying quality and have it decorated and arranged in the fashion you see fit. We foresee a lot of recruiting being done inside these offices in the future, so you better have it shiny if you don't want the newbies running off to the glitzy enemy corp office down the hall."

Decorations and fashion assume we'll be able to acquire various items from the market, and in time be able to build them. It'll certainly be interesting to see how expensive a Tech II hat stand BPO will be. But like many areas of the gameplay design, things like player items and furniture are only just being thought about. Again the watchword is realism and CCP is not wanting the game to lose its space focus, or for things to get out of hand. If players are able to design and sell clothes, there will be restrictions on who can wear them.

"If you own it, you can wear it," says Ólafsson, "but there will not be full crossdressing. So men will not be able to wear gowns and some races might not be able to wear costumes from other races. We're quite authoritarian when it comes to allowing the EVE players to customize their characters to absurdity. There are virtual worlds out there that allow you to fit rubber ducks on your head and have hairy, bearded men in wedding gowns, but that does not fit at all with the back story and setting of EVE and would do more damage than good in my humble opinion. Not that we're against crossdressing, we just don't think it applies to EVE."

NOTHING TO FEAR

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect is that CCP isn't planning – at least not initially – to allow any kind of violence to take place. Given that EVE's most defining aspect is its harsh PvP setting, doesn't that jar with what EVE is all about?

"Well, stations in EVE are already safe areas," points out Ólafsson. "I know some people want to be able to go into a station and pull out someone they're hunting, but today stations represent sanctuary from harm. We feel that for the first version of walking in stations, having a fully-fledged combat and mêlée system is an overly optimistic goal. This is particularly so in light of our already highly optimistic goals of setting a new standard for the quality of rendered and animated humans in MMORPGs, or PC computer games in general, come to that."

CCP has always approached its engineering challenges in staged deliveries, meaning it builds a working version of the software many times throughout the development cycle. The first version, in this case the version that will only be used in-house, will be severely limited and just have the core functionality needed to get it running. "We play around with that version," explains Ólafsson, "see how it feels, see what we think of it and then take it one step further, adding a few features, playing around with that, refactoring the code and so on. We still have a plan for everything, but the plan changes when we realize that feature A is extremely difficult to do, and that we can easily throw in feature Z even though no one thought of it before we had the thing running. It's how EVE itself was developed and we're dedicated to this philosophy, because it saves us from spending years on code that when finally run together with everything else, perhaps isn't that fun at all." Short answer, stations should be safe to begin with but there's nothing to say that combat in some form may not enter the equation down the line.

LIE TO ME

Regarding chat, the current plan is to have new chat channels for each 'room' or area in the station, with the local system chat remaining as per now. What isn't currently planned is any kind of integration with the Vivox part of the client in terms of lip-synching. "If it turns out that it's simple to do, we may throw it in as a bonus," says Ólafsson, "but to begin with, we're committed to creating gorgeously fancy, hyper-realistic humans and having them animate in a convincing manner."

BARREL OF A GUN

Perhaps a telling statement as to how combat might be subsequently developed was when Ólafsson quietly said during his Fanfest presentation that he had been playing a lot of *Syndicate*, an old Bullfrog game from 1993 that had players controlling a squad of mercenaries, selecting weapons between them and assigning targets. It was tactical, but fast-paced. One might imagine having your character surrounded by a small squad of bodyguards, fleshy drones if you will, which, depending on the security level of the station or outpost, would be packing small incapacitators or a full-blown arsenal of assault rifles. That's assuming CCP ever allows avatar combat.

"*Syndicate* was a great game when it came out and had a very important element in it," Ólafsson remembers. "You could go into a city and do the mission required, or you could take your time and play around with driving the cars, brainwashing the civilians or do target practice on top of a building without the game system penalizing you or rewarding you. Parallel to the actual game itself was a sort of a sandbox that allowed a player to have fun just interacting with the world and seeing how it reacted. This is an element in a lot of games today, but I mention it because it's one of the first games that I remember that gave you that immersive feeling of not having to hurry or follow a single thread of playing, but rather gave you an environment that you were comfortable navigating and exploring, killing NPCs as you went by. It also had tons of people walking around, reacting to your actions, giving you the sense that you were in a living environment that would still be there after you left."

If players won't be able to rip each other's guts out, they will at least be able to raid each other's wallets. Well, not directly, but in a similar way that lotteries and gambling is tolerated via the EVE forums, some stations will endorse gambling and may offer a number of mini-games. Ólafsson reveals that CCP plans to offer an EVE twist to classic games. "We are looking at tying the games in to material that has already been mentioned in the Novellas and Chronicles. There are many ideas, but we have yet to implement any of them so that they run in the game client."


As to other exchanges between players, there are no plans to have any deep or meaningful interactions. Hand-shaking, shoulder punching and perhaps a little slap to the face will be allowed, but considering that dancing is definitely out – since pod pilots are beyond such things (although someone neglected to tell Istvaan Shogaatsu that at the Fanfest) – it will be no surprise to hear that those of a romantic persuasion will find it difficult to get their freak on. As Ólafsson says, "children do play EVE as well."

SWEETEST PERFECTION

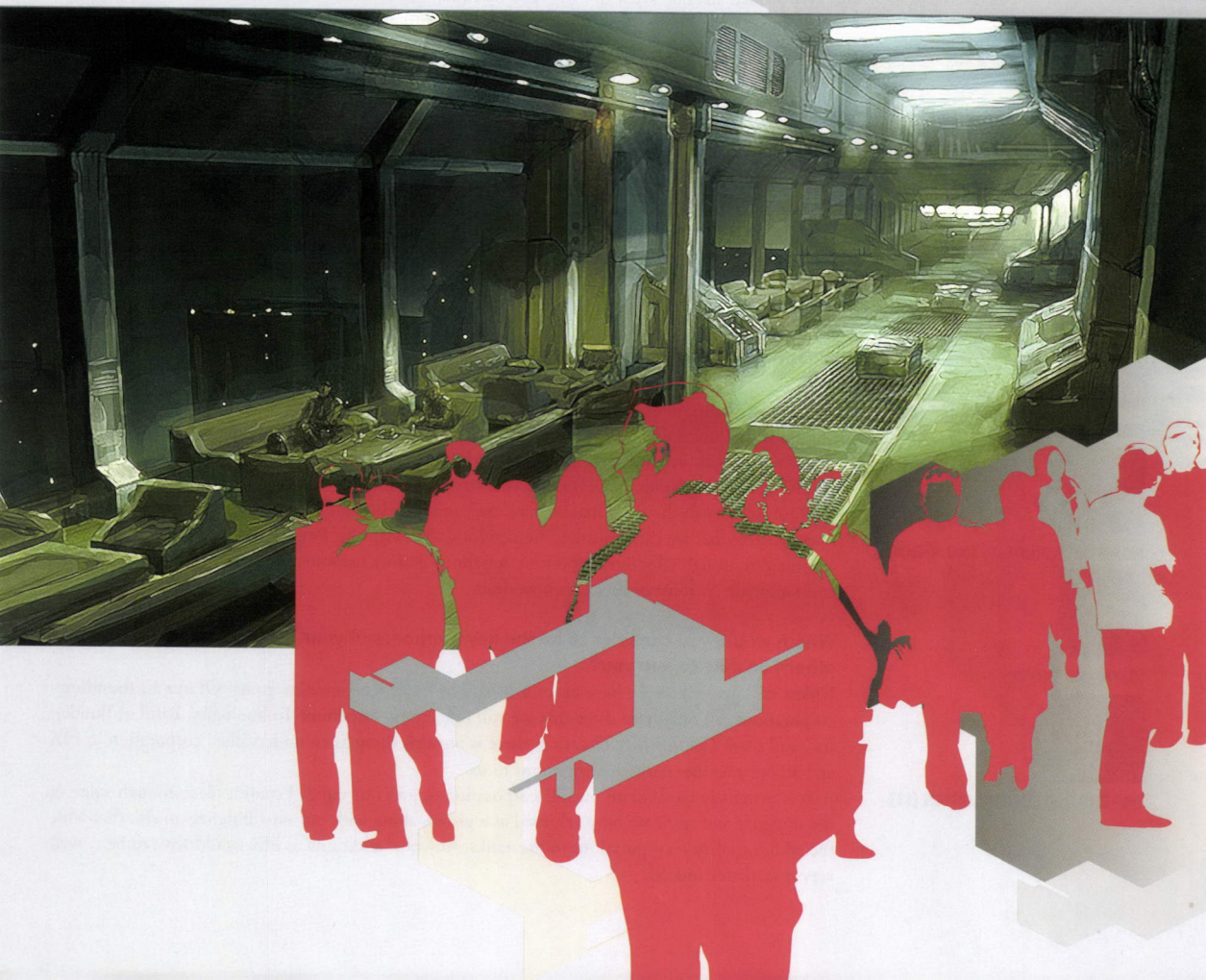
Although *Ambulation* will begin in stations, it will in time move across to other areas as EVE begins to open out across planetary surfaces and inside ships (no doubt part of the 10-year plan that was so vaguely outlined at the Fanfest). According to Ólafsson, it has overtaken Planetary Interaction as the top gameplay feature to headline whatever the next expansion is going to be post-Kali: "We are working full-time on the stations, with clear goals, but planetary flight has been pushed back as it involves resources that up until now haven't been available because we've been doing other new stuff for *Revelations* and so on. An optimistic goal for the *Ambulation* project would be 12-18 months I'd say, but there are no promises..."

As for the reasons behind the development of *Ambulation*, there have been some accusations that the whole concept was born out of necessity to pave the way for the mooted *World of Darkness* MMO (see p6), that EVE is being used as a technology testbed for a separate game.

"Despite the fact that we've only been in production with this expansion for a few months, the decision to put people into stations was made at the beginning of 2006," insists Ólafsson. "The project was mostly delayed because of me running off on paternity leave. Doing this now certainly helps us prepare for the *WOD* MMO, as we'll hit the ground running when it comes to rendering hyper-realistic characters, but it was actually planned long before talks of the merger started."

It's a moot point anyway. The effort seems to be justification enough of the usefulness of *Ambulation* and is sure to add to the appeal of EVE as being a social game. Clearly, there are many technical hurdles to overcome, but then trying to offer up the best-ever character animation in any computer game is no mean feat when you look at what's being constantly developed by the likes of Valve Software (*Half-Life 2*) and Epic Games (*Unreal*, *Gears of War*). As ever, CCP has set its sights high – clearly excited by the possibilities. We wouldn't have it any other way. 

➡ WE'RE TALKING ABOUT AVATARS THAT RESPOND DYNAMICALLY TO THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. A NOISY OUTBURST OR HIGH-RANKING OFFICER WILL CAUSE HEADS TO TURN



FIRMUS IXION [FIX]

FORMED: November 25, 106

AREA OF OPERATION: Querious

MAIN ACTIVITIES: Diplomacy, Defense, Resourcing, Manufacture

PRINCIPLE DIRECTORS: Valhallan (Chairman), Avernus (Diplomacy), Wierd Beard (Recruitment)

FOUNDER: Finite, Carbide Industries [CAR]

MOTTO: 'Forged in conflict'

URL: www.eve-fix.com



AVERNUS IS THE CEO OF IMPERIUM TECHNOLOGIES, ONE OF THE HANDFUL OF CORPORATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN A KEY PART OF FIRMUS IXION SINCE IT CAME INTO BEING MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO

How was Firmus Ixion initially formed?

Firmus Ixion was formed out of its predecessor, the Querious Defense Force (QDF), a military organization comprised of independent corporations that came into being in the interests of common mutual defence. Querious was, at the time, considered to be territory belonging to the Coalition of Free Stars (CFS), and there was a number of organizations that operated in their space; notably The Deep Space Mining Alliance (DSMA) and the Star Alliance (StA).

Of the CFS's three regions, Querious had the distinction of being protected by the QDF, and we were regarded as being unique in that we owned all the stations in the region. The other two regions' stations were held by an outside entity, the Fountain Alliance. We were rushed into announcing our newly formed alliance when the CFS and its allies, DSMA and StA, attacked these other stations. Not knowing their intent for Querious, and not trusting the CFS's track record, we took our future into our own hands. What followed was the destruction of all three of those organizations.

What are the grand aims of the alliance and how is it structured to meet them?

Mutual defence has brought us together and helps hold us that way. We seek to strengthen ourselves as individuals, along with our corporations and our alliance as a whole. Military strength and experience is equally as important as infrastructure and our economy, we never cease in our efforts to improve in all areas.

These days we operate under a cabinet government, the leader being elected by the people, and that leader forming a team with which to govern us. However, we don't restrict ourselves with tradition or habit, and we are constantly working towards finding ways that improve our overall efficiency and streamline our processes.

What makes FIX a unique entity?

With the recent collapse of the 3rd Front Alliance, Firmus Ixion is now the oldest CONCORD-sanctioned alliance in existence. Of the first 10 IGAs created, only three are still in operation. Also of note is that no alliance has ever held conquerable stations as long as we did. The time for those stations to remain in our hands has passed, but the accomplishment stands.

This is a trifling thing, however; our true strength is in our tenacity. No matter what is thrown at us, or how harsh the trials that we face, we cannot be broken. Very few organizations can say likewise. Together we can withstand tremendous adversity. Our longevity as an alliance has been contested thoroughly by those who have sought to destroy us; some of them have sought such an end repeatedly... most of them are now dead.

Whom would you consider to be the key members of your alliance, and how would others be able to join you?

Unless we know where we have been, it is hard to know where we are going. Of our 12 founding corporations, we only have three that are still remaining: Imperium Technologies, Band of Builders Inc. and Dark Centuri Inc. That said, there is no such thing as an undervalued corporation in FIX and all our member corps are important to us.

It is extremely hard for an outside corporation to join our ranks. I cannot place enough value on the integrity and spirit we have achieved as a group, along with our unwillingness to risk that with the addition of new corporations to our ranks. Any new additions to FIX would have to be... well, very remarkable indeed.

MEMBER CORPORATIONS



EXECUTOR CORP.
FIX HOLDING COMPANY
[F.H.C.]



CONVERGENT [CNV]



SWEDISH AEROSPACE INC [UGOO]



PHOENIX PROPULSION LABS [P.P.L.]



HUNTERS AGENCY [H.A.]



BLACK AVATAR [BA]



LEGIONARI [LEGIO]



DARK CENTURI INC. [JAKD]



KDM CORP [KDM]



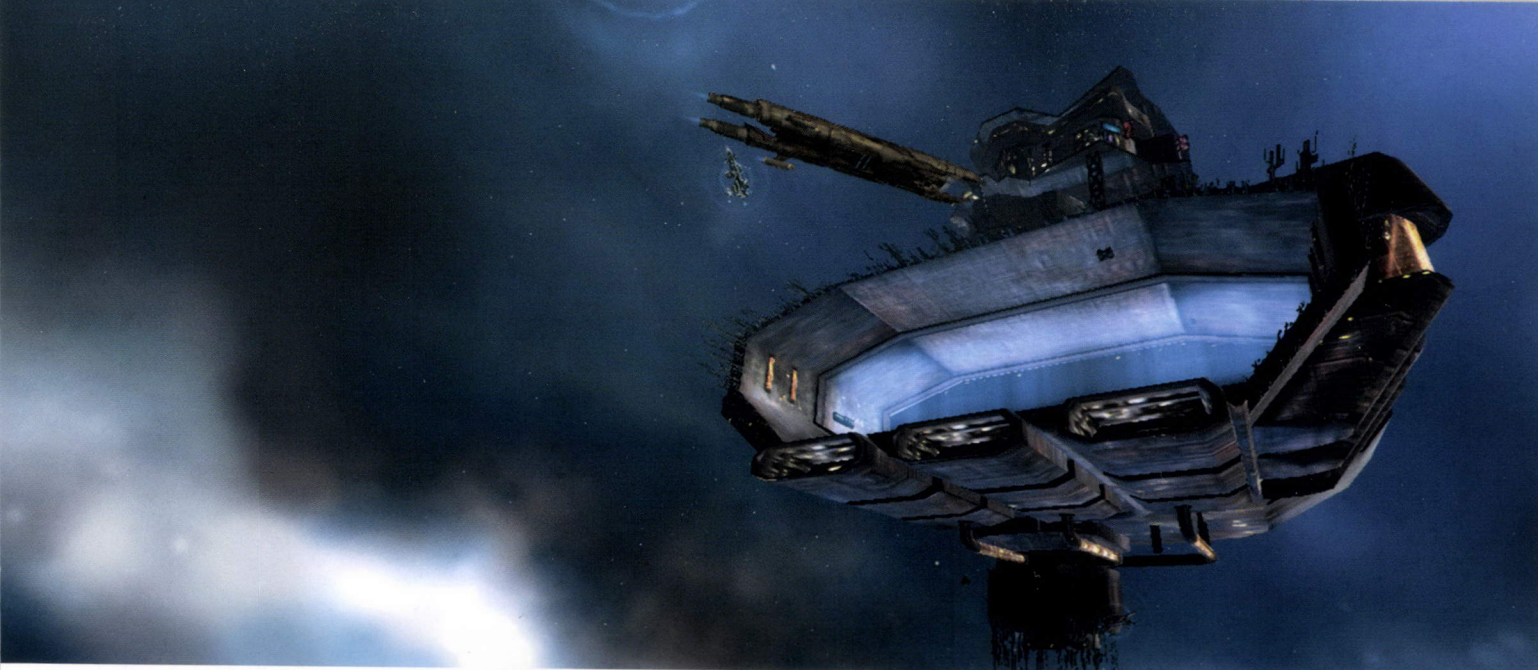
BAND OF BUILDERS INC. [-BOB-]



XOTH INC [XOTH]



IMPERIUM TECHNOLOGIES [IT]



Who are the key people in the overall FIX hierarchy?

We place people of talent and drive into positions of responsibility; as an alliance, the value we place in them is immense. I hesitate to publicly acknowledge individuals for fear that they may be targeted from the outside for the value that we place on them. What is already public information is who our CEOs are, however. Their dedication to our future, and their cooperation and friendship, is what bonds us together. If there is one person I would single out, it is our current Chairman, Valhallan. He has done a remarkable job in guiding our alliance to where we are today and his abilities are truly formidable.

What are your economic and military strengths?

Our economic operations are a kept secret. Intel about our economic activities is a subject that could

be used against us by others. Suffice to say, our economy is continually evolving and being expanded upon with all due diligence.

Militarily, our main strength is our enemies' tendency to underestimate our forces prior to engagement. Our second strength is our pleasure to point out the errors in their judgement. With many changes in technology on the horizon, you can be assured that FIX is undergoing a full review of its capabilities in order to ensure we are well prepared.

Whom do you consider close allies or mortal enemies?

It is well known that we are closely aligned with the Band of Brothers alliance. Our history with BOB is rich in detail, and not without public controversy. While we do have other alliances whom we are pleased to call our allies, we keep many of our external agreements as closely guarded secrets.

One of the most famed grudges between alliances can be firmly placed at the feet of Firmus Ixion and the Stain Alliance. While SA has gone through several incarnations, we have been in conflict with all of them for many years. Finally, SA has fractured, and its

corporations have gone on to form new alliances. Due to many of these having moved into different regions of space though, we have little contact with them. What the future holds in those regards is difficult to determine. However, there is a history of bad blood.

How many wars have you been involved in since you formed?


Far too many to remember. Most conflicts involving FIX have been fought in Querious; we have been a primarily defensive alliance. Our most famous conflict would likely be the CODA war, however. In what was termed as the Coalition of Dead Alliances, FIX was assaulted by what started out as a single alliance, and ended with the simultaneous participation

of forces from eight alliances arrayed against us. By the end, we were down to 500 pilots, too stubborn to quit. Against us were more than 10 times that number. Having

been through many months of vicious battles, we were down to the last of our assets; we wouldn't be able to hold our last station, our withdrawal to empire to rebuild and then strike back was a foregone conclusion. CODA's goal was nothing less than our complete extermination.

Band of Brothers entered the fray, scattered the CODA forces and, following talks, we reached a favourable agreement.

What does the future hold for FIX?

A great deal of effort and time has gone into the rebuilding of our alliance following the CODA war; we are constantly striving to surpass our previous levels of strength. Nothing less than being counted as a powerhouse in economic and military might is acceptable for us; and that is our future. 

SOLDIERS OF WAR: PRINCIPAL CONFLICTS

107 Coalition of Free Stars / Star Alliance / Deep Space Alliance (Querious)

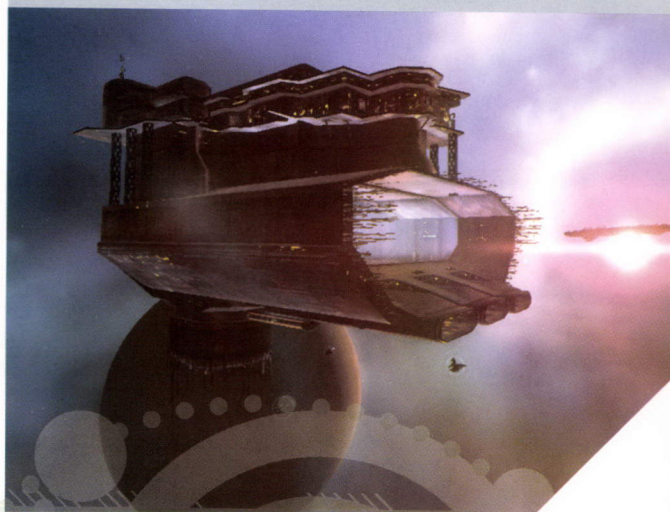
In cooperation with Fountain Alliance, this was a short conflict that cleared the regions of Querious, Period Basis and Delve of their former occupants. The conflict was conclusive, and the former occupying entities ceased to exist following the loss of their space.

108 Arcane Technologies / Stain Alliance (Querious)

Standing alone, FIX was drawn into conflict following its reluctance to allow others to use its area of operation to strike at Fountain Alliance. Stain Alliance, a former foe, joined in the fighting, considering it an opportune time to attack FIX. Band of Brothers alliance also made its original entrance into FIX affairs at this time.

108 CODA (Coalition of Dead Alliances) (Querious)

In a massive effort to destroy FIX once and for all, this conflict saw many alliances come and go, but the result was a constant pressure on the corporations and pilots of FIX that wore down ship reserves and resources. This conflict resulted in FIX losing control of Querious, and the beginning of a new relationship with Band of Brothers.



Left to right:
Finite, Valhallan,
and Wierd Beard -
FIX's principle Directors



ADDICTION

NEW FICTION BY JOHN KASTRONIS

His heart shuddered. They told him it would be like this. They told him it would happen eventually. Every pod pilot would experience it, some day. His ship's hull had been breached, a Badger cargo tug lost, the crew and most of the cargo destroyed. The pirates that had done the wicked deed – annoyed that the only thing that survived the wreckage of the 'Trade Runner' were some meager cargo expanders – angrily locked and scrambled his capsule.

"Five million, we spare your pod," one of the marauders' voices echoed around in his head.

"I don't have five million!" he told them.

The cutthroats all laughed. They were laughing so that he would hear it, sending it out from their capsules to his open comm frequencies. "Wrong answer," the same mocking voice came again.

They opened fire on his pod. As their weapons shredded the tiny shell, he screamed out, sucking in a mouthful of putrid, hydrostatic goop. Then the neural burner kicked in and everything went dark.

+++

When he woke up, he was groggy and everything looked blurry. He tried to breathe, but something that wasn't air invaded his lungs. He tried to expel it, to cough it out, but more of the viscous liquid flowed into his airway. Suddenly, it was gone and he was in clean air again. He retched, splattering synthetic pseudo-placenta over the floor of the clone bay.

"How do you feel?" asked a man in a crisp, white lab coat.

He curled up on the floor. The air was cold, so cold. He shuddered, an unwanted newborn left in the winter snow for the wolves. "C... cold," he stammered, his teeth chattering painfully against each other.

The man in the lab coat nodded. "Hmm, that's normal," the man said, making no move to help him

up. "However, it seems your scan went through without trouble. You may experience a few... minor gaps in your memory, but nothing severe. You should be able to get back into a capsule as soon as you like."

Of course, he thought, I died. And now I'm a clone. He forced himself to his feet, tiny droplets of fluid spattering on the floor around him. The room didn't seem as cold as it had just moments ago, and the man in the lab coat thrust a data-pad at him.

"This is a standard clone contract, mandated by law for all pod pilots. Please sign here and here, and then initial here, and you can be on your way. Should you choose to upgrade your clone, you can do so immediately without the need for signing additional forms." The man's voice was flat and bored, offering no measure of sympathy, welcome, or even pity to the newly reborn person shivering naked in front of him.

"Yes," he muttered, reaching out to take the pen. "I think – Ow!" He jerked his hand back, away from the pen, and shook his hand in pain. Throbbing daggers shot up his arm.

"Hmm," the man in the lab coat muttered, "this must be your first clone, huh?"

He nodded his head, the pain in his fingers having passed.

"Yes, well, I hear that for the first couple of days or so, all your senses will be..." the man in the lab coat tapped the pen absently against his bottom lip. "Reset, I guess. See, the neural burner scans your brain, but it doesn't scan the rest of your central nervous system, including your nerve endings. So you need to be a little delicate until your body gets used to everything."

"I see," he said, with a slow nod. He took the pen again, more gently this time, and stared at his hand for a moment. The pen looked like every other pen he'd ever used, but he could feel small grooves and bumps and imperfections on the surface. He squeezed a little harder, little prickles jumped through his fingers. He smiled a little and signed the contract.

"Thank you," droned the man in white, producing a towel and bundle of clothes from a drawer. "A complimentary towel and jump suit for your personal use. The showers are right through that door there. Have a nice day."

He turned and walked through the door, looking back once to see the man in the lab coat routinely mopping up the mess left on the floor. The door slid shut and he turned, walking into a shower stall. He hung his towel and new clothes on the hooks and pulled the curtain shut. "Thirty-one degrees, heavy stream," he muttered. There was a slight

Illustration: B. Börkur Eiríksson



Ⓢ delay, and water sprayed from the faucet.

"Bloody hell!" he screamed, jumping back from the water and getting tangled in the curtain. He slipped and smacked the back of his head against the wall. Pain exploded through his head, so much that he could only lie there, gasping on the ground. The shower, sensing his fall, cut off the water.

Tears welled up at the corner of his eyes as he sucked in air between his teeth. His head throbbed for a long while, keeping him frozen in a fetal position on the floor. When it finally passed, he groggily stood back up and rubbed the back of his head. More jolts of pain went through him, but they were manageable this time. He didn't feel a knot where he'd hit his head, and when he pulled his hand away there was no blood on his fingers.

With a sigh, he repeated his command to the shower and the water came down again. This time, he gasped, but didn't jump back. "Thirty degrees," he stated through clenched teeth. After a moment, "Twenty-eight degrees," then, "Twenty-five degrees." Finally, the water was cool enough that he could stand it.

He shook his head. He'd been taking showers at thirty-five degrees since he was a teenager. Pushing the thoughts aside, he let the water stream down his face, through his hair, and over his body. The water felt good now. Some people took showers to relax, but he never had. Now, though, he felt like he could stand beneath the shower for hours.

"Hello there?" a voice called out – a woman's voice, deep but feminine. "Anyone in there?" His eye lids snapped open, and water stung his eyes.

As he fought back a yelp of pain, he answered. "Uh, yeah, I'm in here. Is, uh... is there a problem?"

He barely heard a giggle over the rush of water. "No problem at all." Suddenly, the shower curtain was thrown open, and a young Caldari woman, pseudo-placenta fluid dripping off her, stepped into the shower with him. "Mind if I join you?" she asked, stepping under the water and flinging her hair back.

"Um," he stammered. "Aren't there other showers?"

She half smiled at him, almost purring as the water ran down her, cleaning the bluish fluid off her. "Of course there are," she said. "So, tell me, you married?"

"No," he answered before he could think to stop himself.

"Good. You got a girlfriend?"

"N... no," he answered again, pressing himself back against the stall wall.

"Great," she grinned again and stepped forward, reaching up on her tiptoes and pressing her lips against his.

"What..." he mumbled as her tongue snaked into his mouth. Her hands wrapped around his neck as she pressed against him. His head swam, her lips feeling softer than anything, her breasts squeezing against his chest.

She pulled back, the smile still on her face, as she stared up at him with big, blue eyes. "Come on, I know you're fresh out of the cloning vats. Me too," she said. "All these sensations..." She ran a finger down his chest, sending a tremble of pleasure through him. "They're old, but they're new again. Isn't it great?"

"Uh huh..." was all he could get out, as her finger traced lower, across his stomach. "And the best thing of all, sex feels wonderful."

He guessed she was right, and even if she wasn't, the way his brain was going crazy, he couldn't argue. "Who are you?" he groaned. "I'm—"

She suddenly leaned in and kissed him, hard and almost painful. "No names," she said when she pulled back. "This is nothing more than two pod pilots breaking in their new bodies. Now, don't make me do all the work."

As she sank down, her hands and lips causing pinpricks all over, he reached out and touched her.

It was over in what seemed like moments, but she assured him that was ok. She finished cleaning herself off, gave him a last kiss on the lips, and stepped out of the shower. "See you in space," she laughed as she left.

He shuddered a little, disturbed and feeling as if he'd run a marathon. He quickly washed the last bits of pseudo-placenta fluid off and exited the shower. The water immediately clicked off behind him, and he shivered a little in the cool air. He dried off, the towel almost feeling as good as the woman, and pulled on his clothes.

They itched a little, and felt uncomfortable and tight, even though they fit him perfectly. He tugged at them as he walked out of the shower room, back into the clone bay. The same man in the lab coat was standing there, staring at the clone vats, waiting for someone else to die and be reborn.

He stopped right before he got to the door, and turned to the man. "Uh... That Caldari woman that was just cloned," he asked. "What was her name?"

"I'm sorry sir," the man in the lab coat answered, "we can't give out names of other clients. Did she forget something in the shower?"

Ⓢ Suddenly, the shower curtain was thrown open, and a young Caldari woman stepped into the shower with him. "Mind if I join you?" she asked, stepping under the water.

He paused, but then shook his head. "No, no... It's nothing, never mind." His clothes were beginning to feel a little better already and he walked out of the room.

+++

Two months later, and this time it was only a Frigate. He'd been transporting some documents for an agent through low security space, when a marauder caught him at a gate. His ship exploded almost as soon as he was locked. He kicked his capsule into warp, toward a planet, well before the pirate could lock his pod.

The pirate's partner, flying an Interceptor, dropped out of warp beside the planet only a few seconds after he did. His capsule was locked and scrambled, and the taunting voice of the pirate rang in his head: "A million for the pod, and I'll let you go."

A million is a good deal, he thought. "Go to hell," he told the pirate. The pirate didn't even laugh, or curse him, or respond – except by turning on his lasers and shearing the capsule open. He had a moment of regret, when the neural burner kicked in and everything went black.

After tumbling out of the clone vat, he sucked in a deep breath of air. He could taste it, a little acrid bite to it from the chemicals that kept the clone bay sterilized. The technician, a woman this time, handed him his new clone contract. He purposefully brushed his hand against hers, but she jerked it back and gave a look of disgust at the slimy fluid that had rubbed on her fingertips.

"Sorry," he said, gripping the pen so tight that it brought tears to his eyes. He signed the contract, took the towel and clothes, and walked shivering into the shower. The technician shook her head a little, and went about cleaning the floor.

The sound of running water echoed through the shower room. He stopped and paused. "H... hello?" he asked. "Anyone there?"

"Huh?" a man's voice came back. "Yeah, what?"

He paused a moment, then shook his head. "Never mind. Just, never mind." There was an annoyed grunt in reply. He walked into one of the empty stalls and hung up his clothes and towel.

Stepping into the shower, he braced himself. "Thirty degrees, very heavy stream." The water sprayed out at him, scalding him and stinging his skin. He grit his teeth and bore it, letting the water wash off the majority of the fluid, then took the soap and finished up. Every little thing sent tremors through his body, and when he finished, he walked out with a giddy smile.

He dried off and pulled on his new clothes. They were uncomfortable and he pulled at them, his smile getting a little wider. He walked out, gave the technician a smile and a wink, then headed right for a nearby bar.

Tobacco smoke hung in the air and he sucked it in, coughed mightily, and pulled in another breath, savouring the smell. He spotted a Gallente woman, sitting alone near the end of the bar, and he walked up to her. "Hello, miss," he said.

She glanced at him; his hair still wet from the shower, and gave a little smile. "Hello," she said before turning back to her empty glass.

He sat next to her. "Mind if I buy you a drink?" he asked.

She turned back and smiled a little wider this time. "Sure thing." He ordered two drinks, two strong drinks, and quickly downed one himself. The alcohol caused his eyes to water and his throat to burn. His head started swimming almost immediately. She giggled at him a little, and at the end of the night, the two of them left together.

+++

Two months later, the brigands of New Eden caught him at a gate yet again. This time, he hesitated once his ship exploded. His pod floated there, helplessly outside the gate. He'd been doing that a lot lately, freezing when his ship exploded. Before, he'd always got over himself, and escaped before his pod could get locked. This time, he stayed.

The Battleship locked his pod and fired on him, not even trying to ransom him. It was over before he could regret it.

Spilling out of the cloning vat, he noticed the air didn't seem as cold as it normally did. When he squeezed the pen, it only hurt a little. He gritted his teeth and squeezed harder, and the man in the lab coat

coughed a bit, uneasily. He signed the contracts and went into the shower. Once again, the water was running.

"Hello?" he asked. "Is anyone there?"

A woman's voice answered this time. He almost went into her stall, but he stopped himself. "Good luck out there," is all he said as he climbed into his stall and turned on the water. It stung and burned like before and he grinned, letting the water wash over him. He scrubbed and every nerve ending felt as if it was on fire.

When he stepped out of the shower, plucking at his clothes, he bumped right into the woman. She was a Minmatar, and she looked a little uneasy, and she was pretty. He flashed a smile at her. The look in her eyes was familiar to him.

"First new clone?" he asked.

"Yeah," she said. "You?"

"I've been through a few," he said. "You know, everything feels so new when you get cloned."

She nodded and blushed a little. "Yeah... I've found that out."

He took her hand in his. She jerked back a little and gasped, but he didn't let go. Her warm hand felt good. "You know, there's a lot of things you might want to find out. How about a drink?"

"Sure," she said.

+++

Two weeks later, he woke up in the clone vat again. He stepped out of the vat nonchalantly and blinked. Everything felt strangely normal. "Oh, you again?" the man in the lab coat droned tiredly, eyeing him with suspicion. "What is this, the third time this week?"

"Yeah," he said, running his hand through his hair. Not even a tingle. He grabbed the pen and looked down at the contract. "Get into a lot of fights in my line of work," he lied. "Interdiction spheres and all that." He signed the contract somewhat angrily, snatched up his towel and clothes, and walked into the showers.

The water was hot, but not uncomfortable. "Forty degrees, very heavy steam," he told the shower.

"Forty degrees bypasses safety limits," the computer's neutral voice chirped at him.

He growled and smashed his fist against the shower wall. It hurt, and hurt for real. He pulled his hand back and looked down at it. Blood trickled off a knuckle. Suddenly, the shower curtain was pulled open.

He turned around and looked at the Caldari woman as she stepped into the shower. "You!" he exclaimed.

The woman giggled and looked up at him. "Do I know you?" she asked.

He squinted. It was definitely the same woman from the first time he was cloned. She stepped absently under the water, yelping a little from the heat, but otherwise ignoring it. Her eyes were a little glassy and absent, but she reached out a hand and ran a finger across his chest. He barely felt it.

"We met before. In here," he waved one hand at the stall and reached out with the other and instinctively groped. She giggled a little at his touch and turned to him, reaching up to kiss him.

"So, I guess you know the drill then?" she asked as she pulled back.

He bit the bottom of his lip. Her kiss, it just felt like every other kiss he'd had. Her touch felt ordinary. Everything felt so ordinary and routine. "I... I don't know, nothing feels right," he said.

"Oh," she said, giggling again and running a finger slowly down his chest. "That's normal. New clone and all, you feel everything heightened."

He grabbed her hand and snatched it away. She whimpered from his strong grasp. "No! I mean; everything feels ordinary! I don't feel as if everything is new, I feel as if everything is the same!"

"That's strange, I feel just fine!" she giggled again and reached down with her free hand.

He shook his head, ignoring her touch. "Maybe I'm doing it too often. This is the third time this week."

"Oh," she said. "This is my third time today." She

giggled again, manic. She kissed him again, oblivious to his reluctance.

"Today?"

"Mhmm," she mumbled. "And everything feels great." She grabbed his hand and started guiding it over her. "Maybe you're doing it wrong. You're getting only the basic clone, right? Your brain starts compensating for it if you don't."

"Basic clone?" he asked.

"Yep," she said. "Now come on, we're not going to talk all day, are we?"

He finally gave in to her, but the entire thing felt bland. Eventually, she stumbled out of the stall, satisfied, and left him frustrated.

+++

He kept himself safe for another week before he got pod-killed again. Maybe if I wait, he figured, it'll go back to how it was before. When he stepped out of the clone vat, he knew he was wrong.

He just grumbled something back at the orderly and took the clone contract. He signed it half way, then stopped, and thought. He pulled the pen back.

"There a problem?" the man asked.

He swallowed hard and paused a moment. Then, he slowly nodded. "Yes," he said. "Yes, I... um... I only have enough ISK for the basic clone."

The man in the lab coat looked at him for a moment. "Are you sure?"

He nodded slowly. "Yes, yes... All these losses lately, I haven't been able to keep up."

The man nodded and took the pad back, changed a few things on it, then handed it back. He signed it immediately, before he could have second thoughts, and handed it back.

"Alright," the man said, "you've been given a basic clone contract. I recommend you upgrade it as soon as you can, else there could be significant memory loss if you die again."

He nodded, firmer this time. "Of course I will," he answered. He didn't care if his lies were transparent. He took his clothes, his towel, and headed into the showers.

+++

He stumbled out of the clone vat again, the viscous fluid dripping down off him. He couldn't remember how long it'd been since he was last cloned. Memory loss, he thought. But the air was biting cold and he shivered violently. He smiled, his teeth chattering loud in the room.

"Are you alright?" the lab technician asked.

"Great!" he said, through clacking teeth. "Basic contract, please."

The technician nodded and handed him a basic clone contract, which he absently signed. The bumps and lumps on the pen dug into his skin, and the tears in his eyes were a mixture of pain and happiness. Shivering the entire way, he stumbled into the showers.

Water was running in one of the stalls. "Hello! Anyone there?" he called out, giddiness evident.

"Um, I'm in here. Why?" The woman's voice was hesitant. He grinned and found her stall, throwing it open and walking in.


"Hello there," he said, walking under the water. The water was cold, very cold, and he shivered even more. The water felt like pellets smacking against his skin.

"What—" the woman, Gallente, asked before being cut off as he pressed his lips against hers.

When he pulled back, he could see the hesitant look in her eyes. "Feels good, doesn't it?" he asked. She nodded a little. "New clones are like that. Everything feels new and fantastic."

"Who are you?" she asked as he pulled her close.

He tried to think of his name, but it was murky. He thought he'd remember it if he just concentrated a minute, but she was pressing herself against him now, and the feelings were overwhelming him. "No names," he blurted out. "We're just two pod pilots breaking in new bodies."

He kissed her again, already making plans to head out into dangerous space later today. 

John Kastronis is a man, with two arms, two legs, one nose and several eyes. He is prone to bouts of mild monsterism, but maintains a modest living plucking feathers from penguins for the amusement of old ladies.

ACE IN THE HOLE



There's a new card in the Mercenary Coalition's hand. A corporation forged from within.
A corporation designed to embody the ideals of professionalism, skill, and dedication
that have made the Mercenary Coalition what it is today.
A corporation that will help to carry those ideals proudly into the future.
Four aces fly together again.



DARTH SOLO



PLAYER PROFILE

NAME:	Darth Solo
CORPORATION:	Celestial Apocalypse [CELES]
POSITION:	Close-range, fleet-fighting, gang leader
ALLIANCE:	Insurgency [INSRG]
SPECIALTY:	Bringer of Justice
SECURITY RATING:	3.6
MOST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Tool up guys - let's kick ass"
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Where are the 'roids? I fancy mining today lads"



There was a time when hundreds of pirates feared his name, and he makes no secret that, to this day, he's remembered with fear and respect. He is, in the eyes of many veterans, a legend.

Darth Solo is one of EVE's original pirate hunters and he fondly recalls how he would hunt down aggressors while being cheered on by pilots across the star system. This was his time and his name reverberated through the shadows of space. No pirate was safe.

"I loved pirates fearing me and loved the locals loving me," he laughs. "At that time I wasn't actually that good, but my name made them think I was. Fear makes people do crazy things, like hit the wrong controls."

Things have come a long way since then. Solo is now a leader of Celestial Apocalypse and a key security official in the Insurgency Alliance. But, though times have changed, he still longs for the days of the original pirate hunt.

FIGHTING BACK

Solo had always wanted to be a good guy, but the turning point in his life happened while piloting his prized Moa. A pirate jumped him and blasted his ship away without even so much as a conversation.

"It made me mad," he recalls bitterly. "The guy just blew me up and left. All I wanted to do was chat. That was the turning point. It didn't make me fearful, it made me want to get even. I hated the endless gate campers, looking for easy kills and I had to do something about it."

He returned home to Korama, deciding to target the 'bad men' (as he calls them), and opened a local communication channel for the purpose of hunting them down. Immediately he found other pilots looking to get involved. "The beauty of it was that all the support came from normal miners and pilots looking for revenge. I got so many mails it was scary."

The old guys still remember me, some I even call friends now. But I couldn't name any of today's big pirates. Faceless alliances kill everyone now; they are the future

Such was his fame that an anonymous donor even presented him with a Scorpion-class Battleship. "I lost it the next day though," he laughs embarrassedly. "Didn't even fire its guns. I passed out with shock. Oh well, easy come, easy go."

It was around this time that Solo met Shadowthrone, the CEO of Celestial Apocalypse. "He loved what I was doing and wanted in on it. And he had a Megathron, which was nice..." he adds. "His corp was small, only a couple of members, but when he got involved he knew exactly where he wanted it to go."

Using his fame, Solo began to recruit as many fighters as possible. Numbers soared, with many of those first pilots still members to this day. Although he loved the fame, he admits he was never interested in money. "I did it for the thrill of the kill. I wanted the pirates to know my name and I loved them hating me."


His mood turns as he admits that younger pirates have never heard of him though. Both he and Celestial Apocalypse have outgrown those early days and instead work together as an anti-pirate

alliance. "The old guys still remember me, some I even call friends now. But I couldn't name any of today's big pirates. Faceless alliances kill everyone now; they are the future."

THE LONG GOODBYE

Distractingly, Solo begins to murmur about retirement, settling down with an army of little Darths playing at his feet. "I think I've done everything I wished for - perhaps I should leave on a high." He pauses, before grinning. "But I would miss my fellow Celes fighters and my pirate friends too much. The fight is in my blood. Times are changing and politics are moving much more to alliance warfare. Not to be involved is missing out."

In an attempt to journey back to the glory days, he declares he is currently based in the A-1CON star system and offers a hand of welcome to pirates everywhere. "I welcome them here. Tell them we want the fight. I'll even give them an hourly update on our location."

He grins one more time. "It'll be like bringing 'roids to the miners." 



Darth still longs for the fight and boldly invites today's so-called pirates to prove their worth

☞ "Wake up, honey..."

Sensual, and oozing innuendo, a woman's voice caressed the sleeping man's ear. Smacking his lips and cringing at the fetid taste of his morning breath, Zalman Krueger stirred groggily from his mess of a bed, and glanced wearily at his alarm clock, programmed to rouse him with the cooing voice of a Gallente holo-starlet. Just once, he mused, it would be nice to wake up next to a real woman.

Half-walking half-shambling, the stubble-faced Sebiestor navigated his cluttered habitat-cube, nearly tripping twice over dirty clothing strewn about the spartan domicile. It was little more than a box separated by flimsy partitions, the kind of accommodation favoured by ever-transient captains and migrant workers, no more than a hundred squares. The tall Krueger could barely stretch his arms without scraping the bulkhead that formed his ceiling. Arriving in the shoe-closet that the station landlord insisted was a kitchen, Krueger began rummaging through the sparse selection of frozen Re-Heatables® remaining in his desolate freezer.

"Ribs or fish... ribs or fish," he muttered to himself.

In seconds, the meal was ready, and Krueger regaled it with a look of utter contempt. Two spoons' worth of powdered yellow tuber, a pittance of flash-preserved vegetables that likely predated warp travel, and an unremarkable slab of meat floating in red sauce – the kind with the shape of ribs machine-pressed into the meat, perhaps in order to give it an appearance slightly less resembling a turd.

He chewed gingerly, rubbing his head and wondering why he had not died in his sleep. Death seemed the preferred alternative to another day of work. His was the lot of the carrion bird, the undertaker – Zalman Krueger was an interstellar salvage specialist.

A garbage man.

+++

Every food chain needs its vultures. The Eve cluster was one such food chain. Here, prey outnumbered predator by a factor of 10, and the predators knew it. Each day brought with it the death of a thousand vessels, and an abrupt end to hundreds of thousands of lives. Pirates and mercenaries ambushed solitary vessels that strayed toward dangerous space lanes; entire alliance fleets collided with one another in wars that shook the very firmament – and there, faithfully, amidst the blazing wreckage, would be Zalman Krueger and his salvage drones.


His fingerprint sealed the door behind him. The biometric reader was archaic, and easily circumvented, noted Krueger un-easily. Most station quarters came with DNA readers on the locks, but clearly the master of this facility felt them an unnecessary expense. He shrugged, admitting to himself that there wasn't much he owned worth stealing. Aside from the habitat-cube, his only worldly possessions were his ship, his bank account card, and the clothes on his back. It would be at least another month until this grim labour generated enough funds to upgrade his vessel to something proper.

As he made his way through the station's concourse and toward the berths, he stopped to watch a five-minute broadcast of the Scope news channel. The Scope was, in a way, his lifeline; bearing news of promising

GARBAGE MAN

NEW FICTION BY
TOM CZERNIAWSKI





conflicts sure to leave the void scattered with dozens of shattered shipwrecks. A travel advisory warning of pirate activity some dozen jumps away came as a welcome treat – there was a time when Krueger would have cursed himself for taking joy in the misfortune of others, but the part of him that cared had withered away long ago.

Rubbing the sleep from his tired eyes, he clambered through the bowels of his Probe-class Frigate, pressing his slender body through walkways and access tubes seemingly constructed with midgits in mind. He came upon the capsule, that dread tomb of slime and polyalloys that enabled control of his vessel, and hesitated. Each time he entered it, each time the neural spike drove itself into the base of his skull, he would see a brief flash of memory, a momentary short-circuit of the brain revived to crystal clarity. Sometimes the memories were good, but Krueger had amassed a lion's share of nightmares, and lately it was these that surfaced with increasing frequency.

Today would be no different. In the scant seconds between his sense of vision shutting down and being replaced with the omniscient mind's-eye-view of camera drones, he beheld his first salvage run – his first bitter taste of reality in the Eve cluster. He recalled the glee with which he tractor-harpooned and hauled the fragments and modules from that devastated Megathron hulk in Kisogo. He recited in his mind the projected earnings for the five intact ion cannons, three current pumps, two pairs of intact capacitor consoles, the various lesser mechanisms and devices, and the huge chunks of armour plate now resting in his cargo hold. Then came the flood of dread as Krueger came to know for the first time – and again – that salvage was a dirty business.

He had almost forgotten when it happened, that ships often come with crews. Still innocent, he eagerly bounded toward the cargo hold to inspect his plunder; fully expecting a haul of pristine modules ready for the market only to come face to face with the purest of horrors that interstellar warfare had to offer. The bodies were everywhere. Some welded inside their turret stations by immense heat, others torn open by explosive out-gassing, others still no bigger than children. He would spend three sordid days working away at his bounty with a pressure-washer, his nose plugged with tissues in a desperate attempt to ward off the stench of cooked, rotting flesh. The stench clung to everything. He broke many times, unable to continue and retreating to his quarters to drown himself in liquor, refusing to face the cemetery within his cargo hold. The meager Credits he earned for the salvage came at too high a price.

➡ The bodies were everywhere. Some welded inside their turret stations by immense heat, others torn open by explosive out-gassing, others still no bigger than children

Whether motivated by guilt or a mild psychotic break, he had spent the next week digging up crew manifests from the Megathron's salvaged computers. It felt wrong to leave them there, with no names to go with their dead faces. Painstakingly he identified each ruined carcass, each scorched skeleton, and decided to send word to the relatives of the dead. For the most part, the families of that unfortunate Battleship's crew did not appreciate being informed of their loved ones' death by a garbage man, and he abandoned the effort soon after.

+++

His vision – his ship's vision – returned to him in a flash of brilliant light. The spindly Probe Frigate unsteadily emerged from its station berth, rocking slightly side-to-side. His autopilot already set for the hostile depths of the Heimatar region, Krueger tried to purge the echoes of memory still lingering in his mind like the sticky miasma of death in his

cargo hold. Since that fateful day he had made a point to become more detached, more callous toward his chosen profession. He even went to the length of installing automated pressure-washers in the hold. That way, the dead would have no faces, no names.

In a half hour's time, the journey's final stargate whirled to life and spat him out into carnage. His eyes went wide as he beheld a graveyard of still-flickering starship skeletons. Most were Frigates, most split in two or broken into splinters – farther from the gate lay the motionless form of a mark-one Badger Hauler, its IFF beacon broadcasting the call sign 'Trade Runner', and its command section missing entirely. With a thought, he loosed his salvage drones, and trained his Probe's scanners upon wreck after wreck, poking about the war-zone like a grave robber of old. His drones flitted among the wreckage, bright sparks flaring from their welder-arms as they detached anything their primitive artificial intelligence deemed valuable. He allowed himself a small measure of satisfaction as he heard the dull clang of heavy metal objects being deposited in his hold. Frigates were the best of pickings, he mused – not many crew aboard those.

His mind focused entirely on guiding two of his drones as they surgically excised an autocannon turret from what looked to be half of a Rifter, Krueger could hardly be blamed for failing to notice a distant shimmer of light. A hundred clicks away, appearing as little more than a faraway dot, the mammoth Apocalypse-class Battleship came into being as it dropped its cloak. Only the scream of his shipboard AI would rouse him from his preoccupation, but by then it was far too late. The dot became a point of light. Six brilliant columns of that golden light bridged the expanse between Krueger's flimsy Probe and the pirate Battleship, crushing the Frigate almost instantaneously. The blast and subsequent impact was so jarring that the garbage man's brain nearly reset itself. It took but a moment for him to come to his senses, and he quickly realized a ship no longer surrounded him, but a two-meter-long egg-shaped tomb and an expanding cloud of debris. He willed the capsule to flee, but the marauder was already firing his second salvo.

Zalman Krueger ceased to exist.

What little remained of his spindly Probe, soon came to join the myriad wrecks tilting and twinkling in starlight. Had he renewed his clone contracts, Krueger might have remarked upon the irony of a garbage man's resting place being among garbage. As a man he was gone now, replaced by an amnesiac cretin spilling forth from a clone vat some light years away. As fate would have it, even his final resting place would not remain undisturbed for long. Some hours later, the stargate flared again, disgorging a Wreathe-class cargo tug.

The first mate of the Wreathe beheld the graveyard before him, as seen from the porthole of the antiquated Hauler's mess hall. "Looks like good salvage out there," he cheerfully exclaimed to his fellow crew. "Let's grab a bite and get to work! You guys want ribs or fish?" ➡

E-ON regular Tom Czerniawski most recently penned last issue's cover story, 200 Rounds.

STAR FRACTION [-SF-]

FORMED: January 25, 107

AREA OF OPERATION: Varies – currently the Mito Constellation

MAIN ACTIVITY: Guerrilla Warfare

PRINCIPLE DIRECTORS: Jade Constantine (Leader), Jonny Damordred (Fleet Commander) Atandros (Chief Military Advisor), The Cosmopolite (Deputy Leader and Chief Political Officer), Tatsue Nuko (CEO of Tabula Rasa), Yvonne Pyros (Tech II Production Director)

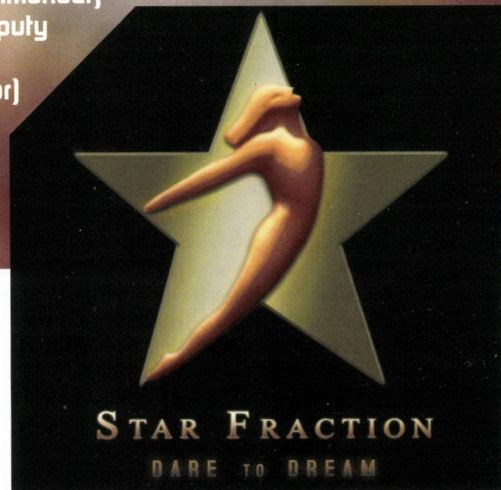
FOUNDER: Jade Constantine

MOTTO: 'Freedom is a jagged bitch...'

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/sdxal>



IT'S TWO YEARS SINCE STAR FRACTION CAME INTO BEING, BUT IN THE EYES OF ITS UNCOMPROMISING FOUNDER AND LEADER, JADE CONSTANTINE, ITS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN FIGHTING TO 'FREE' EVE FOR MUCH LONGER THAN THAT



Can you give us a brief rundown of the history of Star Fraction?

We were established in the first wave of Concord-sanctioned alliances as a union of free-space, radical corporations opposing the imperialist mindset of typical 0.0 settlements. Our first act as an alliance was to declare a guerrilla campaign against the extremists of the Curatores Veritatis Alliance [CVA] who was trying to export its brand of religious fundamentalism into the nullsec Providence Region bordering core Imperial space. This led to a brutal two-month engagement that saw the CVA forced to bring all fleet assets back from the frontier to oppose Star Fraction aggression and ultimately ended in a deadlock with great casualties on both sides.

While certainly a heroic struggle, this campaign did reveal weaknesses in our initial political structure. We improved things with a streamlined political consensus and much improved focus on combat capability and direct intervention techniques.

What are your common goals?

The core goal is to present a clear and present danger to the ideology of nationalism in the EVE star cluster. We believe that capsule pilots are the next stage in human evolution and can (and should) be able to move past the petty nationalist and territorial thinking of our forefathers. We believe space travel represents a golden opportunity to slip the bounds of bad old ideas and regressive thinking, and that the whole capsular caste can move beyond the realm of the nation-state into a future of unbridled, anarcho-capitalist free trade and free movement as individuals possessed of the wealth of nations and the power to define our own personal sovereignty.

In summary, we are enemies to anyone who dares tell us 'thou shalt'. We are libertarian free thinkers with guns and the will to use them to defend the freedoms we boldly claim.

What makes SF unique?

Star Fraction makes war only on bad ideas. We believe that the NBSI [Not Blue Shoot It] ideology is a crutch for weakness and half-sighted, crippled men. It's a tacit admission of failure to motivate a political movement without the oppression of neutrals and bystanders and we despise it.

Star Fraction in contrast makes war only on those who would chain our freedom and seek to restrict our movement. We are enemies to no-one who seeks commerce and free trade, or who is content to remain neutral in nullsec beneath the vast tapestry of stars.

What are your membership policies?

Star Fraction is a meritocracy with individual capsule pilots passing through a testing phase, assessed on combat participation and

appreciation of free-space ethics, leading to informal acknowledgement of a member's status as an independent Free Captain of the Star Fraction. Free Captains make broad political decisions in conclave and open discussion. Debate and spirited arguments are common, but in the end we are united in our cause and commitment to ending the virtual domination of national/territorial thinking in the star cluster.

Unlike most, we will not shoot you just for being neutral – it is common for members to come and go, try new things, and rejoin when they feel the calling. We do not make enemies easily – but once we are moved to violence, the results are seldom pretty for our foes.

Where do you call home?

At present we are in the Mito Constellation in Caldari space for the duration of our campaign to eliminate the influence of loyalist

MEMBER CORPORATIONS



EXECUTOR CORP:
JERICHO FRACTION
[JERIC]



TABULA RASA
SYSTEMS [TR-S]

ALLIANCE ASSETS

ALLIANCE COMMANDERS: 80 (approx)

ACTIVE FLEET STRENGTH: 25 Battleships, 3 Dreadnaughts, 6 Carriers

FLEET RESERVES: 500 Battleships, 500 Cruisers, 2000 Interceptors, 500 Tech II Cruisers (approx)

ECONOMIC ASSETS: Weekly passive income from Tech II portfolio is around 2-3 billion ISK

POS ACTIVITY: None

STARBASES: None

CLAIMED SYSTEM: None



Left to Right: Atandros, Tatsue Noko, Yvonne Pyros – three of SF's main Directors

State militia organisations in the region. But as a whole we have no 'home' as such. We maintain many 'firebases' in nullsec, with our members having access by jump clone rapid deployment, but none of these places are linked to pride or such transitory notions as territorial homesteading. We are Free Captains in more than name. We go where we choose; we strike where it hurts the enemy most.

What are your alliance's economic and military strengths?

Our prime economic strength is our Tech II portfolio. It means we have an immense passive income and we literally make a fortune selling advanced hulls to everyone (even our enemies in the midst of conflict) – all Star Fraction pilots have access to some of the best ships in the cluster.

Our primary military strength is individual pilot skill and flair. Nobody joins SF unless they want to fight and improve their combat performance. We are flashy single-combat duellists, deadly raid and skirmish specialists, and clever small-scale tacticians, with tricks, traps and ruses our stock in trade. We are never going to spend time and effort assaulting a network of enemy structures in the interests of swapping sovereignty flags on a map. We prefer to demonstrate that nobody is safe in the belly of territorial conceit and we'd rather shoot the executor of a space-claiming alliance out of his Badger II in the midst of all his power than crash our assets against the wall of his castle without.

Whom do you consider close allies?

We have few friends or long-term allies, and where such friends exist it's often complicated. Our oldest ally, for example, is Reikoku

Corporation inside the Band of Brothers alliance. Old bonds of kinship and mutual respect exist there. We helped in the founding of Reikoku and they stood with us in our darkest hours. The Great Northern War forged us both into what we are now. Ironically, though, we are enemies to the rest of Band of Brothers. It makes any suggestion of working together a little moot. But it's refreshing to know that some honour is deeper than short-term political pragmatism. Beyond this, we are currently working with the Black Rabbits corporation in Mito to destroy Caldari Nationalism and we have a friendly working relationship with Lady Revan's Sabi Sabik BloodVeil Cult in its long opposition to Amarrian conceit.



What about enemies?

Most of our past enemies are actually dead. Entities like Taggart Transdimensional, The Phoenix Alliance, Biomass, and the Pirate Syndicate – these names have gone to the biomass vats and passed out of common remembrance. It's rare that long-term enemies of Star Fraction remain, but the few that do are those who pretend towards free-space ethics, but corrupt the actuality with flawed understanding. Prime among these would be the RAZOR alliance in the north who once claimed to be 'freeing' the population of Pureblind by electing themselves a police force and deciding who was 'good' and who was

SOLDIERS OF WAR: PRINCIPAL CONFLICTS

107 Curatores Veritatis Alliance (Providence)

This war ended in a stalemate, Constantine conceding that Star Fraction ultimately lacked the means to destroy the Amarrian alliance and claims the CVA itself was short of will to continue the fighting beyond the SF retraction.

107 Imperial Republic Of the North/RAZOR Alliance (Pure Blind)

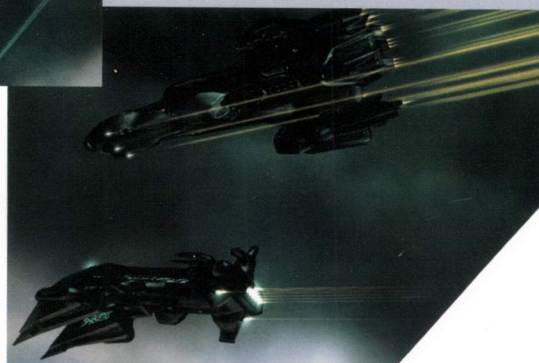
The first major conflict after an intense period of internal reform ended in what Constantine claims was "the collapse of IRON as an effective force in the North."


107/108 Curse Coalition/Red Alliance/Veritas Immortalis (Curse/Great Wildlands)

A six-month campaign against 'standings enclosurism and cloying imperialism' in the near south. Inconclusive results saw the Curse Coalition dissolved but other territorial powers rose to take its place.

108 Kimotoro Directive (Lonetrek)

Operations in the Mito constellation are being concluded against Caldari militia corporations and their supporters.



'bad'. They've now regressed themselves into simple NBSI gangsterism in the Tenal region. This kind of entity is an example of the contaminating influence spreading from the core imperial regions – they believe themselves to be building a dirtside 'nation' and justify slaughtering neutrals on the grounds of 'national defence'. Their time will come. 

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MEINIR MUIREANN



PLAYER PROFILE

NAME:	Meinir Muireann
CORPORATION:	ISD Interstellar Correspondents (ISDIC)
POSITION:	Editor
ALLIANCE:	Interstellar Services Department (ISD)
SPECIALITY:	Internal caffeine processing
SECURITY RATING:	0.0
MOST LIKELY TO SAY:	"This article needs more fedos in it."
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY:	"Less war reports, more human-interest stories about prize-winning veldspar asteroid!"



"Do excuse the mess please," apologises Meinir Muireann,

gesturing at the various piles of clutter which cover many of the surfaces of the tiny room. That said, the office of the Editor of the ISD IC programme is significantly neater than the average journalist's place of work. Indeed here in the Polaris system, where land prices are horrifically expensive even compared to the inflated standards of the core systems, any office is a luxury beyond the dreams of all but the most important and wealthy of citizens.

"I used to let the Fedos out to keep the place tidy," he says gesturing at the two small, tentacled creatures laying sluggishly in their glass enclosure against the side wall. "But they kept trying to digest important documents and leave behind the mess. I could have lost many great stories."

TRASH TALK

He sits down behind the desk and shuffles a few papers into piles, clearing a space in the center. "Being part of IC is very important; our job is to provide news coverage on events involving or closely concerning the capsuleer elite of New Eden, and present this news in an objective manner."

He alludes to no more – nothing about the difficulties of trying to remain impartial in an increasingly partisan and fractured universe – and picks up a waste basket from the floor, moving it to a position just below the lip of the desk. Reaching out with his other arm, he sweeps the small forest of empty coffee cups from the table and into the bin's gaping mouth.

He continues: "I was fresh out of university and didn't really have a clue how I was going to pursue a career in the field of journalistic writing. When I saw a recruitment drive on the GalNet asking for reporters, I decided to apply and see where it took me. I didn't really think much of my

⌚ We all share the same common reasons for becoming reporters. We want to inform the citizens of the galaxy about what's going on, while always presenting the news fairly



It's a big universe out there, but Meinir aims to bring it all to you

chances, but they interviewed me, and a few weeks later offered me a job so I began my training." He laughs, "I must've done something right to still be here."

MISSION STATEMENT

"Like most Intakis," he says of his background, "I grew up in the Gallente Federation, and I think that had a profound and positive impact on the choices I made. I'm a huge believer in both freedom of speech and freedom of expression, and I think that it's important for reporters to exercise and defend those rights."

He leans back in his chair and runs his fingers through his dark hair. "That's not to say that other races can't be reporters in IC – quite the opposite in fact! The Interstellar Correspondents is made up of reporters from all over, and we all share the same common reasons for becoming reporters. We want to inform the citizens of the galaxy about what's going on, while always presenting the news fairly."

NO 'I' IN TEAM

Explaining his day, it appears not dissimilar to any local news Editor, of which there are hundreds across every settled planet. He arrives at the office late, drinks gallons of

coffee, reads copy, organises reporters, and then leaves later than he ever intends to. His only weakness as an Editor is that he doesn't seem to be the kind that enjoys the sound of his own raised voice.

"No, well, I suppose that's because I have a very professional team behind me. So long as they have clear guidelines and a realistic deadline – and so long as they don't stray too far from either – I'm usually happy. Sometimes there's a big story which requires me to work much later, still, that's the cost of being the Editor I suppose."

Meinir leans forward and flashes a smile. "I'm really proud to work for the IC and I'm very proud of what we have achieved. With the number of qualified pilots increasing every day, it's logical that the IC will expand in size to report on the increasing amount of news the capsuleer population generates. I'm looking forward to it."

Can they cover it all? "It's a big universe out there, sure, and a lot is always happening, more each day. Yes, we have amazing resources, but we're quite a small team and having to be unprejudiced is very difficult, something our critics fail to appreciate. To them I always offer the challenge to join us. We always need good and talented people." ☒

BATTLESHIPS ARE THE MOST POPULAR MULTI-ROLE SHIPS IN EVE AND NO OTHER CLASS OF VESSEL HAS SHAKEN THEM FROM THAT PEDESTAL. BUT WITH FOUR NEW BATTLESHIPS FRESH OFF THE PRODUCTION LINE, WHAT ARE THEIR SPECIALIST ROLES AND HOW WELL DO THEY STACK UP AGAINST EVE'S EVER-WIDENING CHOICE OF VESSELS?

TIER-3 BATTLESHIPS



TEXT: DIGITALCOMMUNIST

Veteran pilot and know-it-all, DigitalCommunist has been E-ON's chief test pilot for 18 months. Sadly, all good things must come to an end, and now retirement beckons. We did have a nice gold watch for you, but we left it in escrow and then Revelations hit. Sorry.

ARTWORK BY JOHN AUGAR

➡ In my sixth and final Testflight article (yes, I'll be handing in my driving gloves for good after this one), I will be covering Revelation's latest additions to fleet warfare – the Tier-3 Battleship. My main focus will remain on discussing the intended roles of each ship, how well they perform, and whether or not they measure up to expectations for that role. For all but Gallente, this happens to be fleet combat. It's important to keep in mind that, by design, the Battleship has been created with enough configuration possibilities that it can be adapted to virtually any situation. There is no true scale of measurement that defines how a ship can be used, what success it will achieve or how much enjoyment you will derive from flying it. Thus, little introduction is needed, save for the assumption that all of us are content just to have something fresh to stare at on those long days. ↻





AMARR

ABADDON

➡ Emphasising its role as a fleet ship, the Abaddon description claims to bring death and destruction to heretics at range, while remaining undefeated itself. Piloting Amarr ships myself on occasion, the premise of burning heretics and not dying had me intrigued enough to investigate further... and lo, did Digi investigate. On the first day, He noticed the slot and turret layout as being identical to that of the Apocalypse. On the second and third day, He tried various fittings, none of which could sustain fire for very long. On the third day, He also concluded the Abaddon sucked hard, and slacked off for the fourth and fifth day. On the sixth day, He got an angry email from Zapatero asking when the article would be finished. And on the seventh day, Digi threw on a heavy capacitor injector and marvelled at His Creation.

Now, as anyone could point out, circumstances don't always allow you to refill charges between fights – even assuming the 4.5 minutes of continuous fire is enough to see you through a single fight. This makes it good for 'home defence', where you happen to have a nice stash of ammo nearby. If you plan on moving it into enemy territory, it requires a certain level of logistical strength and pre-planning before you can field an aggressive number of these bad boys.

Because that's what they are,

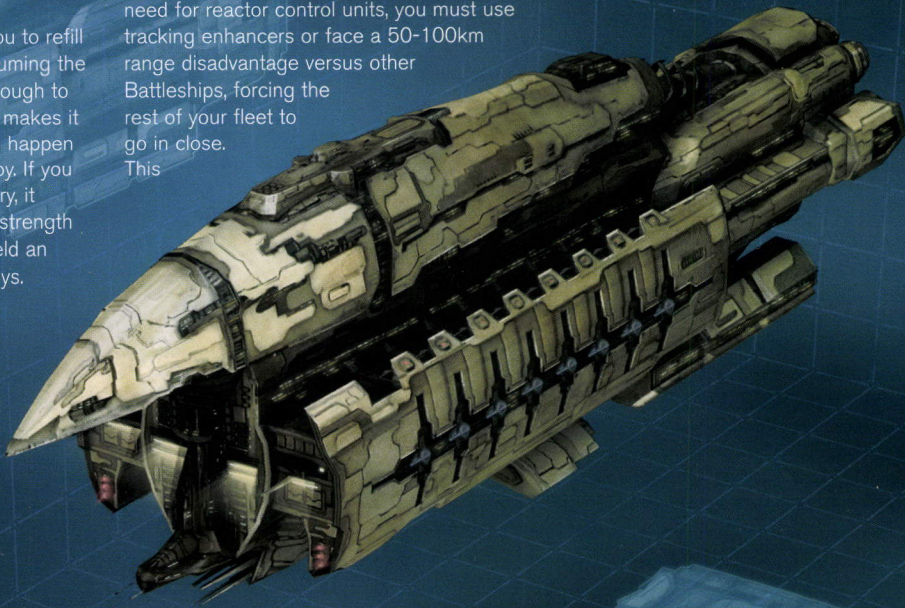
right? One almighty ship whose righteous lasers illuminate with glorious vengeance!

Not quite... Revelations features an ill-advised nerf to long range Tech II sniper ammo, in this case Aurora L. Wholly justified in its entirety, if I may add. This nerf happens to reduce damage output by a whopping twenty-six-point-something per cent, which is about the same amount you gain by flying the Abaddon. Or in other words, you are flying a pre-nerfed Apocalypse.

If you are not feeling even slightly miffed because the ship also happens to be tougher, just you wait. The ammo change also features a reduction in range by 20 per cent. Since lasers typically have the shortest falloff of any turret, they rely heavily on optimal to strike the enemy. Assuming you follow the suggested setups in this article and avoid the need for reactor control units, you must use tracking enhancers or face a 50-100km range disadvantage versus other Battleships, forcing the rest of your fleet to go in close. This

happens to negate much of the durability the Abaddon would normally have with plates in the lows.

One should not mistake this for needless bashing though. I wholeheartedly agree with the decision to penalise those wishing to dodge the brunt of this nerf. Otherwise we would see nothing but Abaddons everywhere. To simplify this decision-making process for those still confused, I have broken it down into the following: Armageddon is good if you are either cheap, broke, or love its phallic shape. Apocalypse is great for prolonged fights, or if you don't know anything about capacitor management. Thus, Abaddon wins hands down, but only if you are prepared to suffer holy damnation.



HIGH
8 x Tachyon Beam Laser II

MED
1 x Tracking Computer II
1 x Heavy Electrochemical Capacitor Booster I
2 x Sensor Booster II

LOW
1 x Large Armour Repairer II
1 x Internal Force Field Array I
2 x Tracking Enhancer II
3 x Heat Sink II

RIGS
3 x Ancillary Current Router I

FITTINGS
665.00/750.00 TF
33759.00/34938.75 Mw

MULTIFREQUENCY L
5178 Alpha
753 DPS
0.0258159421245 rad/s
42km Optimal
25km Falloff

AURORA L
3453.3 Alpha
502 DPS
0.00645398553112 rad/s
167km Optimal
25km Falloff



MAELSTROM



There is a large buzz surrounding the way this ship was designed. And by that, I mean there are a lot of people whining on the forums or threatening our beloved developers with the nasty and unimaginable.

Even though I have no particular fondness for the travesty of aesthetics that is Minmatar, the argument being spewed forth is pretty solid in my opinion. The Maelstrom suffers from a dichotomy between its fleet-oriented role and the ship bonuses it receives. In short, the larger a fleet battle is, the more skewed it becomes towards single-volley damage (alpha strike) over rate of fire.

Meet useless bonus number one: five per cent large projectile rate of fire per level. This is where artillery, with a traditionally weaker damage over time, performs really well. Problem is that

it also goes both ways, and if you obliterate the enemy in the blink of an eye they will likely do the same to you (unless they're part of ASCN). The incoming damage becomes massive compared to the amount you are pulling back with a shield booster. So much so, that in one cycle your shields are already toast.

Meet useless bonus number two: seven and a half per cent shield boost amount per level. Now, if you read that and immediately thought of using this article in your next boost-Minmatar-whatever forum post, please roll up this

magazine and smack yourself. Five of the eight 'standard fleet Battleships' are primarily armour tankers, and two of the three remaining ships have next to no hardeners or extenders fitted. This makes the relative damage difference between projectiles and other weaponry almost negligible. The last time explosive and kinetic damage types were undesirable in combat, I was still flying Ravens.

Secondly, while the Tempest may have more theoretical damage output, you will be hard-pressed to fit two missile launchers with artillery. If you manage to botch together such a setup, you'll notice they're not very effective at sniper games.

HIGH

8 x 1400mm Howitzer Artillery II

MED

1 x X-Large Shield Booster II
1 x Invulnerability Field II
2 x Tracking Computer II
2 x Sensor Booster II

LOW

1 x Tracking Enhancer II
1 x Internal Force Field Array I
3 x Gyrostabilizer II

RIGS

1 x Ancillary Current Router I
2 x Core Defense Field Extender I

FITTINGS

753/800 TF
26300/28875 Mw

EMP L

5096 Alpha
523 DPS
0.0194377173614 rad/s
42km Optimal
43km Falloff

TREMOR L

3706 Alpha
380 DPS
0.00485942934036 rad/s
152km Optimal
43km Falloff

Finally, having the good alpha does not translate into 'must destroy everything instantly'. The Tempest would not be considered useless in fleet battle even with its half-turret disadvantage; so I remain unconvinced that the Maelstrom is anything less than a necessary upgrade. The only real drawback is build cost, and if you can't afford to insure (and subsequently lose) a Battleship, you might want to reconsider your ship choice the next time you're out on fleet ops. Then there are the smaller wrecking hits. By now, some of you are plotting my demise for such a heinous omission. I'm not worried though; I'm not the one overcompensating for something.



CALDARI

ROKH

➡ Rokh is the best fleet Battleship. You can stop reading right here. Just kidding! Maybe. The Rokh is the only Battleship which has no racial counterpart to compare to. This makes it very hard to feel dissatisfied overall, as it truly adds a new dimension to combat for Caldari specialists. That doesn't mean the rest of us can't whine though.

Personally, I find it disturbing that any Caldari vessel should have more than six turret hardpoints. Not just for consistency or racial design reasons, but balance too. Despite having said the B-word (very taboo around here), the damage output is high enough to make it a sensible choice for any organisation. Lack of damage may seem like the number-one drawback, but above a certain number of Battleships – not a very high number, mind you – you can make short work of any target.

To further the list of reasons why, at extreme ranges, the enemy can't even fire back. In medium ranges (around 100km) you are using a higher damage ammunition type over your

enemy. Tracking computers/enhancers are not as relevant because of the 250km imposed lock limit, allowing for better defense – making it a lot harder on those with primarily thermal, kinetic, and explosive damage types. The ship is also very easy to setup, so you do not have to waste all your rig slots on Ancillary Current Routers as with Amarr. Still not convinced? Order in the next 20 minutes and you will receive a complimentary 'I Win!' button.

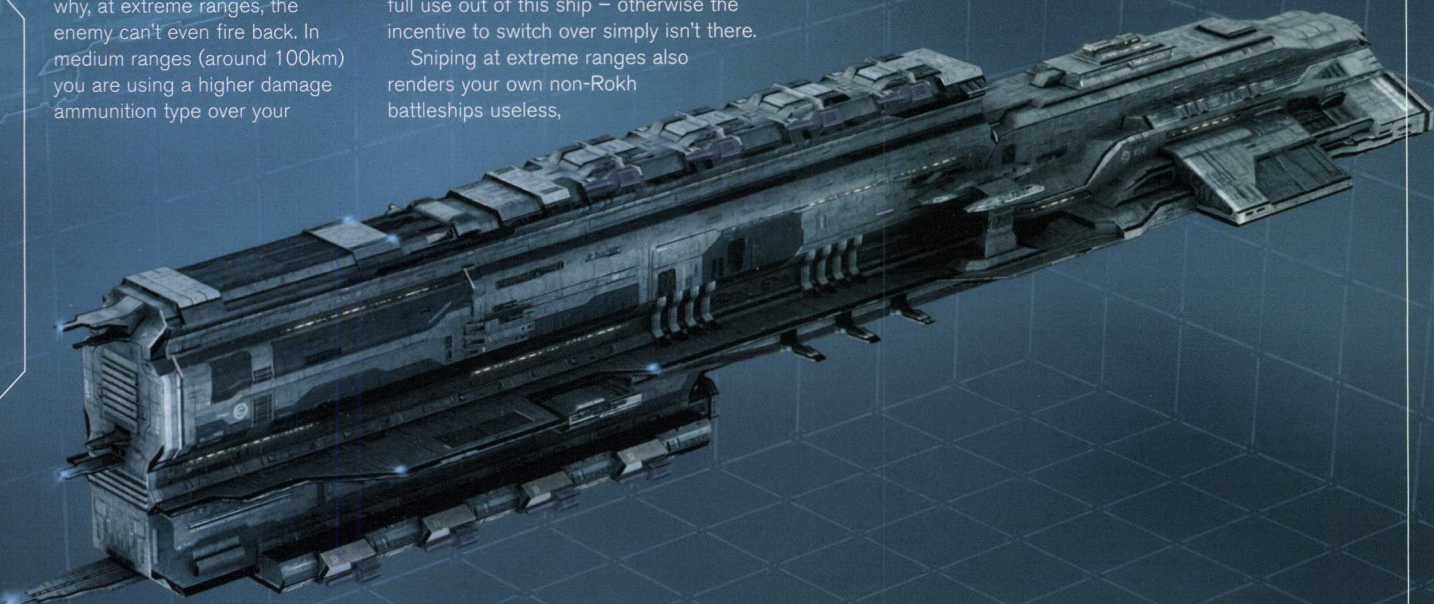
Now... sensing the inevitable question running through your heads, the reason we won't see a complete and unequivocal dominance of Rokhs, is that most Caldari specialists have either given up on the idea by now and trained for something else, or dumped all their skillpoints into missiles. Those with large hybrid skills are mostly Gallente pilots, and even if they have mediocre Caldari skills (as I have), one would need decent shield skills to make full use out of this ship – otherwise the incentive to switch over simply isn't there.

Sniping at extreme ranges also renders your own non-Rokh battleships useless,

so the entire concept will not become a real nuisance until some alliance leaders decide to standardise their fleets. Either way though, it's inevitable.

If this causes you to whimper sheepishly, fear not; there is a master plan. An endgame to Caldari supremacy, if you will. This is all a ploy by CCP to get revenge on the missile-spamming, nub-ship-loving, agent-grinding pilots who crashed the economy with overinflation. When they become nice and comfortable – maybe even start feeling a little bit invincible – that's when we hit 'em. Drop a fleet of ships packing tracking disruptors, afterburners, and maybe some toasty, warm torpedoes right on top of them. Then they will know our pain, oh yes.

*It helps me sleep at night, okay?



HIGH

8 x 425mm Railgun II

MED

1 x X-Large Shield Booster II
2 x Invulnerability Field II
1 x Tracking Computer II
2 x Sensor Booster II

LOW

1 x Power Diagnostic Unit II
1 x Internal Force Field Array I
3 x Magnetic Field Stabiliser II

RIGS

3 x Core defence Field Extender I

FITTINGS

957/975 TF
19459/19687 Mw

ANTIMATTER L

2486 Alpha
473 DPS
0.015640625 rad/s
62km Optimal
30km Falloff

SPIKE L

1658 Alpha
315 DPS
0.00391015625 rad/s
223km Optimal
30km Falloff



GALLENTE

HYPERION



Ah, finally. Since I have a slight track record of mocking my own race, I will go on record here and say that the Gallente have a very solid lineup of PvP ships. I definitely won't be cynical by mentioning how the root word of Hyperion is 'hype' and that's about the only thing it lives up to. Or proclaim this ship to be the final nail in the coffin for the Battleship-blaster concept. Nope.

On a more positive note, I absolutely love the bonuses. I am a massive fan of tanking myself, and despise using damage mods. Real men don't need them to win; they crush enemies with a cold stare and flex of the biceps.

Other notable qualities include a powerful CPU, a decent capacitor, and plenty of armour. All of which are extremely important to survivability.

However, there are two extremely critical flaws with the Hyperion, the first being slot layout. To put it bluntly, one Multispectral ECM is no longer 'teh win'. The only really decent uses for a fifth medium slot would be sensor boosters, tracking computers, second stasis webifiers, or tracking disruptors.

Aside from the sensor boosters, you're attempting to compensate for the lack of tracking bonus. The reduction of low slots to six leaves you with three tanking options, none of which are very appealing. I firmly believe dual repairers are a necessity, so entertaining the thought of single repairer 'active tank' for PvP is

something I would reserve for the Singularity test server. Plating up is costly to fittings and mobility, also negating the entire point of having a repair bonus in the first place.

The second, glaring flaw with the Hyperion is its lack of powergrid. A mere 250 megawatt advantage does not compensate for 1654 megawatts of blaster goodness. The ship must be flown with powergrid enhancing rigs, or its combined damage output suffers dramatically. As a fleet ship, the Hyperion has the upper edge with its higher hitpoints (roughly 15k armour with rigs) and superior damage. Tracking is not as big of an issue at sniper ranges, and as a close-range ship it can be turned into a poor man's Vindicator with injectorless sustainability or some Gallente interpretation of the AC Tempest. As a pure blaster gunboat, it is simply not worth the time, money or effort. Short of all-out damage, virtually every configuration only manages to compensate for various drawbacks – primarily tracking and tanking.

But it's important to consider the trends in PvP. They tend to favour configurations which have versatility in the form of Nosferatu, electronic warfare, and range. The up close, in-your-face

style of combat remains the most difficult in EVE. By admission, and the description, we are given 'one of the most lethal and versatile gunboats ever' to remedy the situation. Your own satisfaction, therefore, is a matter of personal preference, specialisation or versatility. G

HIGH

8 x 425mm Railgun II

MED

2 x Tracking Computer II
3 x Sensor Booster II

LOW

1 x Medium Armour Repairer II
1 x Tracking Enhancer II
1 x Internal Force Field Array I
3 x Magnetic Field Stabiliser II

RIGS

3 x Trimark Armour Pump I

FITTINGS

712/750 TF
19083/19687.50 Mw

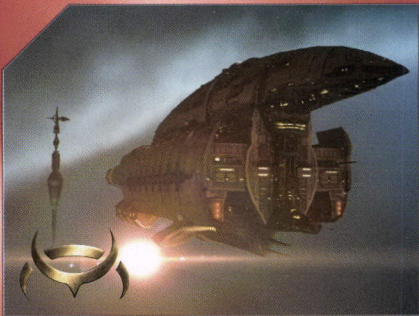
ANTIMATTER L

3108 Alpha
591 DPS
0.0207875588449 rad/s
50km Optimal
30km Falloff

SPIKE L

2072 Alpha
394 DPS
0.00519688971121 rad/s
182km Optimal
30km Falloff

TIER-3 BATTLESHIPS AT A GLANCE



ABADDON

The Abaddon is a celestial tool of destruction. It is designed to enter combat from the outset, targeting enemies at range and firing salvo after salvo at them, and to remain intact on the battlefield until every heretic in sight has been torn to shreds.



MAELSTROM

With the Maelstrom, versatility is the name of the game. Its defensive capabilities make it ideally suited to small raid groups or solo work, while its eight turret hardpoints present opportunities for untold carnage on the fleet battlefield.

	MODULE / EQUIPMENT BAYS				BASE POWER VALUES				DAMAGE RESISTANCE SHIELD / ARMOUR				SKILL BONUS			TARGETING			
	HIGH SLOTS (TURRET / MISSILE)	MED SLOTS	LOW SLOTS	DRONE BAY (m²)	BASE SPEED	POWER GRID	CPU	CAPACITOR	BASE SHIELD / ARMOUR	EM resist %	EXPLOSIVE resist %	KINETIC resist %	THERMAL resist %	FRIGATE (RACE SPECIFIC) per level	COVERT OPS per level	BASE TARGETING RANGE	SCAN RES	SENSOR STRENGTH	SIG RADIUS
ABADDON	5 (2/2)	3	3	0	215ms	45	215	250	188 / 344	0 / 60	70 / 40	47.5 / 34.5	20 / 35	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-19.65%) Small Energy Cap Use (-10%)	Cruise EM Damage (+5%) Cloaked Velocity (+25%)	60km	450mm	Radar 17	45m
MAELSTROM	5 (2/2)	3	3	0	235ms	40	220	200	219 / 300	25 / 77.5	60 / 10	40 / 25	30 / 43	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-19.65%) Small Projectile Damage (+5%)	Cruise Explosive Damage (+5%) Cloaked Velocity (+25%)	55km	500mm	Ladar 17	42m
ROKH	5 (1/3)	4	2	0	195ms	30	245	215	281 / 256	0 / 60	60 / 10	47.5 / 34.5	40 / 59	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-19.65%) Cruise Kinetic Damage (+5%)	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (+5%) Cloaked Velocity (+25%)	70km	375mm	Grav. 20	51m
HYPERION	5 (2/2)	4	2	0	205ms	35	230	235	244 / 281	0 / 60	60 / 10	55 / 51	30 / 43	Cruise Launcher Powergrid (-19.65%) Small Hybrid Turret Damage (+5%)	Cruise Thermal Damage (+5%) Cloaked Velocity (+25%)	65km	425mm	Mag. 18	48m

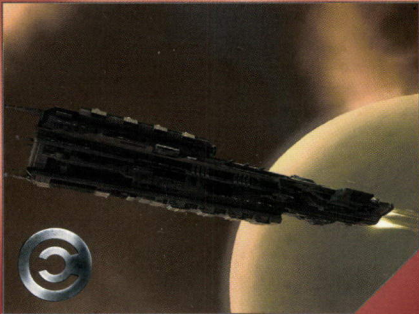
CONCLUSION

When the announcement came that CCP was going to introduce a new set of Tech I Battleships, I had two concerns. First, will they have a role? I am able to confidently say they do. Whether these roles are intended, needed, or even duplicated is open to discussion. Everyone and their alt has an idea of how it 'should be', as evidenced by the volumes of writing created on this topic in the past months.

My other concern was that of damage output. While these new ships manage to do well, one must also consider if our short-battle problems would better be solved by rendering a couple of tier threes flaccid in the sack. Experience tells that no amount of ship tweaking will give us that truly epic fleet battle we all crave. But the path is laid; strewn with the mutilated corpses of various flavours of the month. For what is only the first round, an impressive amount of thought and consideration went into designing these ships. It was years before any of the lower tiered Battleships received this level of loving.

And thus concludes my glorious six-issue reign of contributions to E-ON's Testflight. Hopefully you've had as much fun reading them as I've had writing them. If we've learned anything along the way, it's that it's important to recognise the pace at which things can change. Strategies need to be continually improved after every seemingly minor change. Corporations and alliances have fallen through time because they failed to adapt, and the same holds true for PvPers who believe the rules are static. Whether it's searching for that elusive 'perfect setup' that excites you, or simply working on the flow of hate mail – there is no stopping if you wish to be the one returning home with your hull still intact.

DC signing out. ☑



ROKH

The Caldari State's capsule pilots found themselves rejoicing as the Rokh's design specs were released. A fleet vessel if ever there was one, this far-reaching and durable beast is expected to see a great deal of service on battlefields near and far.



HYPERION

Recognizing the necessity for a blaster platform to round out its high-end arsenal, the Federation Navy brought in top-level talent to work on the Hyperion. The result: one of the most lethal and versatile gunboats ever to take to the dark skies.

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ADGA

KRIGER'S GFX FACTORY

HRAFNKELL OSKARSSON

CCP STARTDATE: June 1999
POSITION: Senior Game Designer
AKA: 'SoniClover'

TO EYES MORE ACCUSTOMED TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, HE PROBABLY HAS THE MOST UNPRONOUNCABLE NAME IN ICELAND, BUT THEN HIS IMPACT ON THE CONCEPTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EVE IS JUST AS DIFFICULT TO VOCALIZE IN A SINGLE SENTENCE. LET'S JUST CALL HIM KELI, THE OLD MAN OF EVE



AND WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING..?

What music would you take with you to a desert island?

Beethoven's piano sonatas and HAM. If you don't know HAM, I pity you.

Favourite films?

Anadeus. It's the only film I've cried over.

What games have inspired you?

Mainly good ones, the bad ones I tend to forget :) No, seriously, my background is in board-games, RPGs and card games, so they are the ones I know best. I guess good of *Magic the Gathering* has some neat concepts that worked well in designing the combat system in EVE. It's the underlying concepts of what makes a game good that I'm more interested in than individual games, so I tend to think of games in a very abstract manner.

Are you a sports fan at all?

I like Binge Eating and Velocity Vomiting: great fun! My approach to sports is very voyeuristic – I like to watch, not touch.

Had time to read any good books lately?

I just finished the latest Terry Pratchett book, *Wintersmith*, the other day (maybe it isn't the latest anymore, he writes them so fast). I bought a few David Attenborough books at a clearance sale recently – I'm currently reading about bugs. Last night I read about the mating rituals of slug worms. Scintillating stuff...

You've been at CCP almost from the very beginning (it says so in the manual), what was the atmosphere in the company like back then?

Much more maverick than the corporate beast it has turned into today :) We were only half a dozen or so when I started, crammed into a tiny attic office. I remember I shared a room with Toti Beck, one of the co-founders of CCP. The room was less than 10m² and was later on turned into the company's pantry. But the worst thing was that Toti chain smoked all day long; you can imagine the air (or lack of it) in the room at the end of the day. Maybe that explains some of the wacky ideas we had :)

How did you end up working at CCP in the first place?

I knew Toti from our college days, when we played board-games together. So when they started looking for game designers they met with me a couple of times before offering me the job.

You're not the most vocal Dev on the EVE website – do you prefer the shadows?

In a manner, yes. All projects within CCP are a collaborate effort and I tend to give the limelight to my collaborators (Gnauton, Zrakor, Hammerhead, and so on).

Many may not know that you worked on a lot of the backstory for EVE? What part of it exactly have you personally developed?

Well, when I started I got a few very rudimentary pointers – five empires, far future, humans only, far from Earth. I took those pointers and fleshed them out, writing a fairly detailed history for each of the five races, coming up with the whole EVE gate/wormhole thing, writing a few short stories as mood setters, etc. Then I wrote all the early Chronicles (or Peek of the Week, as it was known as back then), further fleshing out the world with all the minor factions.

So was it conscious effort – as Reynir alluded to during his 2006 Fanfest speech – to make each empire as good and evil as each other?

Yeah, very much so. The thing is, one of the core concepts we've had for EVE since the very beginning is not to put up artificial gameplay barriers, so we knew from early on that there would be little or no gameplay limitations based on your race selection (small anecdote: the design draft that existed when I started at CCP didn't even have characters – players would just fly around in ships with no personal identity. Needless to say, it was among the first things I advocated we change – MMOs need character advancement like fish need water). So in creating the empires, our focal point was primarily to create interesting RPG hooks for players. The empires also allowed us to set the tone for the atmosphere of EVE, which we've always envisioned as being a rather hostile world – cruel, but not evil (there's a big difference).

You must have your favourite of those five empires?

Yes and no. In creating the empire history, I tried to find a middle road between emphasizing extremities (which acts as a basis for people to role-play around) and making them diverse (which makes them more believable and real). So there are several aspects from each empire that appeal to me. But on the whole, if I had to choose, I guess I would say I like the Amarr best – they're the most tormented of the races, constantly trying to fit an outmoded belief system into an existing hyper-capitalistic space world.

How do you feel the story of EVE has developed in the hands of the players?

I think it's great that the players are shaping history; I only wish we had tried to incorporate that into the empire story, interweaving the two. Perhaps factional warfare will finally allow us to marry the player world history and the NPC empire history together into a coherent whole.

So between story and mini-professions, what else has the mark of Clover on it?

You mean beside writing the original 300-page design document and 150-page user case document for EVE? :) I've always been heavily involved with the agent and mission system, though the lack of support it gets is a constant annoyance. Lately I've also worked on Invention, Rigs, and the COSMOS projects, to name a few.

Is there much in those 450 pages that's still left to incorporate?

Sure, there is a lot of stuff there that hasn't been implemented yet. But then again, there is a lot of stuff in EVE that was never planned originally. Some of it is a bit outdated now, though I hope the section on regulating war gets in at some point, which allowed more structured warfare between corporations, including a detailed system for suing for peace/war reparations. Crew is also still out in the cold, as is cyber warfare (using computer viruses in combat). Hopefully, some of them will see the light someday, but we won't implement them just because they're in the old design document – we'll add them only if we feel it will do the game as it stands at the time good.

What's with mini-professions anyway – and where's the one labelled 'Bounty Hunter'?

The concept for the mini-professions is twofold. One, it allows players to further tailor their characters, making them special to a point. Secondly, it is an avenue for us to introduce new items into the game in a meaningful manner with the players fully empowered. Reward without effort is no reward at all, and diligence and ingenuity should be rewarded accordingly. As for the Bounty Hunter, we don't want to introduce artificial regulations into the open-ended PvP system we have now, so it's effectively on a hold.

The Inventions system (which is effectively a kind of Alchemy mini-profession): How happy are you with its implementation?

It is in a rudimentary form now, plus Tech II invention isn't really exciting (as there is so little uncertainty). But it was good to get it in, as it allows us to develop it further and iron out any kinks before we start using it as the main vehicle for Tech III. Maybe my only gripe at the moment is that the barrier of entry seems a bit too high, but that is easy to balance down the road.

Are professions something you wish to develop, and if so, how?

Yes, I feel the professions are very much in their infancy. We haven't yet seen the depth and diversity they allow. There are new professions we'll introduce later on, but we'll also focus on fleshing out the existing ones to make them more distinct rather than just acting as 'farming' enablers.

How does it feel being a game designer, and always having your ideas brutally cut back by evil Senior Game Producers? ;)

It's been fine since I learnt the mantra *All hail Oveur*. *Oveur is light*, *Oveur is truth*. I chant it every time he shoots me down and then every thing becomes hunky-dory.

Design is obviously a very collaborative process, but you all seem to have your gameplay specialties to focus on. Is there any competitiveness between designers?

The work morale is great and we all help each other out as much as we can. There isn't any competitiveness as such, but we can only work on a limited number of designs at a time and those that are presented in the most coherent and detailed manner are much more likely to get 'picked' than just sketches of an idea. So we try to outdo each other in creating the best design docs.

Congratulations on the summer marriage – how does your new wife get on with Eve?

She's not a gamer, but she's happy that the company is doing well. It's the same with my mom, really. I think she hasn't forgiven me yet for quitting uni to go work on something that's totally alien to her. ☹

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO MISSIONS

PART 2: TIPS AND TRICKS

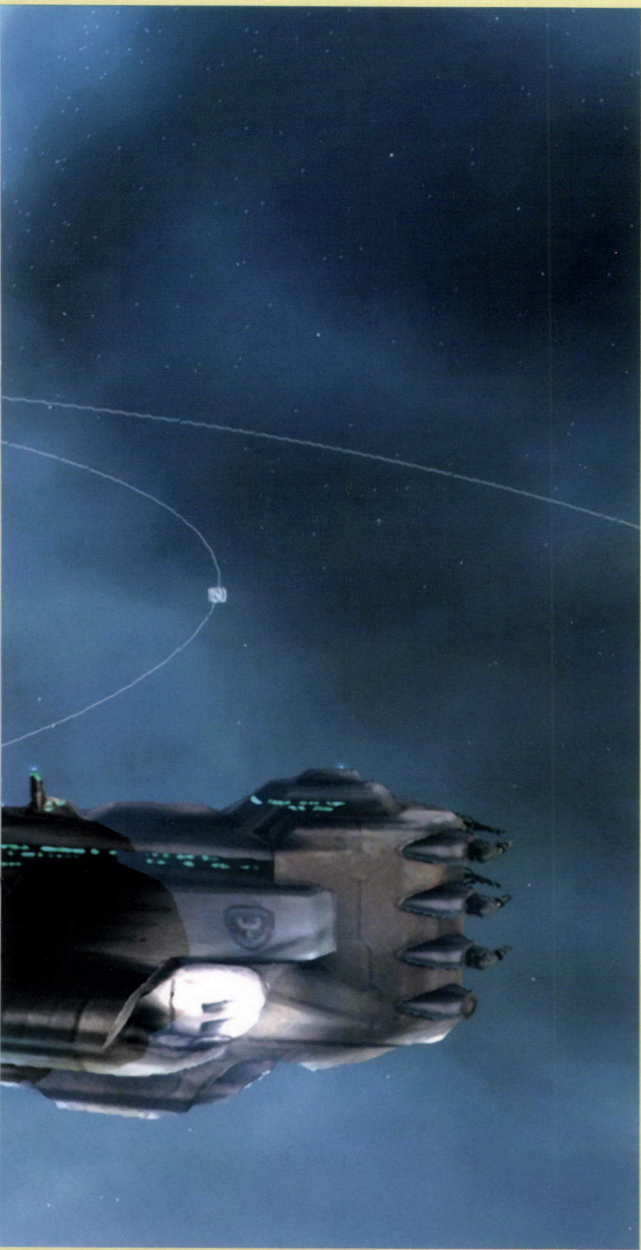


TEXT: ARRS GRAZZNIC

For most people, missions are just 'something to do'. For this guy they are a way of life, a major source of income and a route to fame and fortune.

LAST ISSUE WE LOOKED AT THE BASICS OF MISSION RUNNING, THE REQUIRED SKILLS AND THE ASSOCIATED STANDINGS. IN THIS PART OF THE GUIDE WE WILL EXAMINE THE TIPS AND TRICKS OF THE TRADE TO MAXIMIZE YOUR EARNINGS AND MINIMIZE YOUR LOSSES

You can fly safe in the knowledge that NPC pilots won't attack your Pod



On all but the easiest missions, the key to survival is information. You need to know what to expect on the other side of that gate to ensure you don't need to claim on your insurance and spend hard-earned ISK (and valuable mission time) refitting a new ship.

When your agent offers you a mission, check the mission description for an idea of who you'll be fighting. If it's not clear what faction you will encounter from the text, there is usually a logo somewhere on the page that lets you know who'll be waiting for you. Once you know who you'll be facing, the next job is to know what you'll be up against.

A common tactic is to warp to the mission area in a shuttle to see exactly what's there. This will give you invaluable intelligence and allow you to choose an appropriate ship and configuration. Some rats may attack the shuttle, but NPCs do not attack pods, so even if you lose the ship you won't need to activate a new clone. You used to be able to use your scanner to see what awaits you in a mission or complex but since the Revelations patch, this is no longer possible. NPC pirates, structures and all the other things found in missions no longer appear on the scanner.

SHIP SETUPS

Knowing what you'll encounter will dictate the set-up of your ship (see *Know Your Enemy*, page 61). The various online mission guides and resources are a fantastic source of information about ship configurations and tactics for missions. I strongly suggest reviewing these sites before starting, as well as keeping your own notes about what works for you (and what doesn't).


There are no right ships or fittings to use

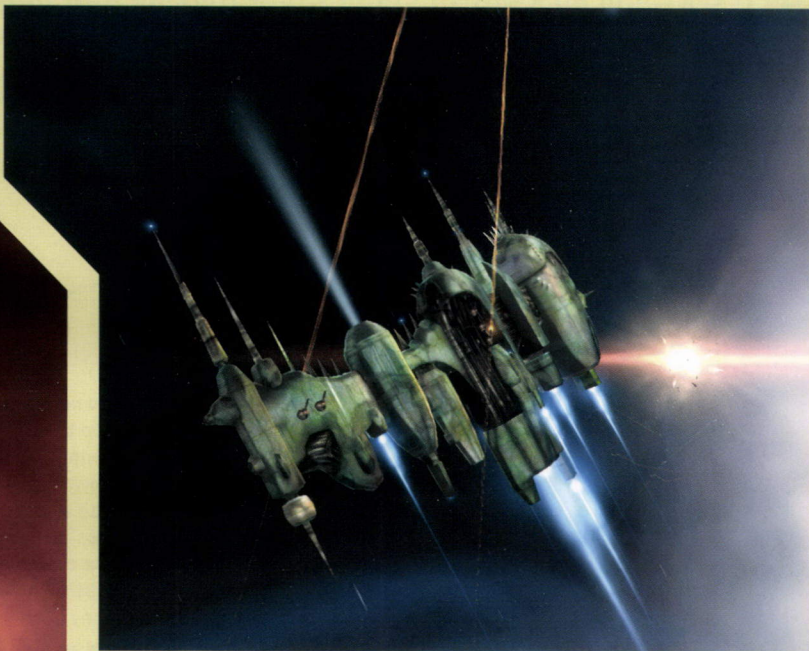
for missions, but there are certainly wrong ones. Players have their own preferences and skills, and different missions require different tactics and fittings. It is beyond the scope of this guide to discuss all possible combinations, but I will make a few suggestions.

With the current mix of missions, you can expect to encounter almost any enemy, from Angel to Serpents to Amarr. You are not limited to the type of ships you would expect to encounter in the region's belts, so you need to be prepared to fight all opponents.

Your first step in fitting out your ship should be to identify the enemy's resistances and fit the defences you will need to survive against the attack, then to load the appropriate offensive modules (check *Faction Damage Types*, page 63, for general recommendations). Your choice of tactics will determine the rest of the ship's fitting. For example, if you want to snipe, you should try and aim for a fitting that will allow you to get to your preferred distance while not losing the ship.

The nature of the mission will also affect the tactics you employ. If you have a regular-space Kill mission then you can easily control your warp-in distance and arrive at a suitable location for your setup. For deadspace encounters you may be deposited in the middle of a swarm of NPCs without the ability to speed out of trouble, so you will need to be able to tank the damage.

For level 4 missions, the most popular ships are the Raven and Dominix class Battleships. As well as being able to support strong shield and armour tanks respectively, the primary weapons systems of these ships have two major advantages. Most importantly, missile launchers and drones allow for all damage 



Always make sure you know what enemies you'll be flying against, and fit your ship accordingly

Ⓒ types to be dealt out, especially useful if you are up against NPCs with different sets of resistances. The other important factor with these weapons is that they are also mostly immune to the effects of tracking, so they can easily hit small ships that Battleship class turrets would normally miss.

Don't be afraid of changing your ship set-up between missions, or even during one. Sometimes you need different damage resistances or different tactics to be able to complete a single mission. Also, the same can be said of the different stages of some missions. Taking this a step further, some dedicated mission runners have multiple ships, each one already set up for specific mission types. Rather than having to refit your ships for each mission, you can select a ready-configured vessel. This greatly decreases the turnaround time but is far from the cheapest option! Knowing what to fit when is the key to successful and efficient mission running.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

When you arrive at an encounter in your perfectly set-up ship, it can be difficult to know what to attack and what to leave alone. Sometimes at warp-in you will be instantly aggro'd (attacked) by a number of ships. In this case it's best to destroy these first before starting on any others. Once you have dispatched them, or if you are not instantly attacked, use the Tactical Overlay to identify separate groups of ships that are clumped together in the same general area. Select a

single ship from a group and attack only this one, then wait to see which other ships attack back. Generally, only the rats from that group will aggro you back. Using this tactic can help reduce unwanted cases of mass aggro.

It's also a good idea *not* to shoot structure or missile/gun turrets unless you are prepared to take on the whole deadspace area.

Attacking such structures causes all ships in the 'room' to target and attack you. You can also get the full attention of the enemy by 'bumping' or running into certain structures, so for heaven's sake be careful.

In many of the higher-level missions, you will encounter 'tackler' ships that will both web and warp scramble you, preventing you from leaving the area or speeding out of enemy range. There are three tactics for dealing with tacklers depending upon your skills and confidence. If you are not sure that you can take all the damage that could be dealt, you will want to take out the tacklers first, allowing you to warp out should there be any major safety issues.

Alternatively, if you are comfortable with your ability to tank out the damage, you can work on the large damage dealers first, thus reducing the overall damage you take and then move on to the smaller Frigate tacklers.

The final tactic is to fit Warp Core Stabilizers to your ship. Since the Revelations patch, these will lower your targeting range and lock speed, as well as using a valuable low slot on your ship. Since this can severely impact the performance of your ship, I would

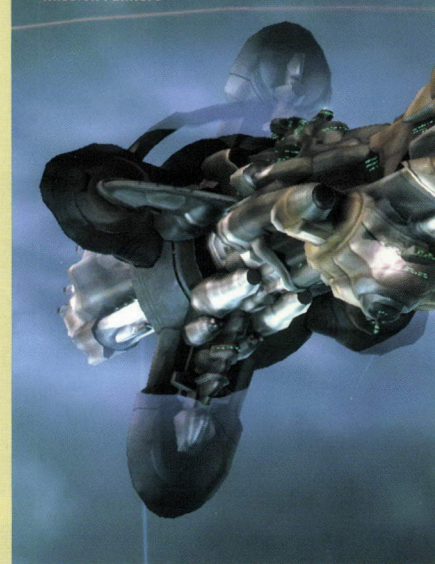
only suggest doing this if you do not have the ability to try either of the other approaches.

MISSION LOOT

Your approach to collecting loot will depend greatly upon your reasons for running missions. If you are purely after the bounty and LP payouts then, on many missions, you can choose to ignore the wrecks dropped by enemy ships and simply cash in the mission and move on to the next one. On the other hand, if you are something of a pack rat, you will probably want to open every wreck in the hope of finding something special to sell or refine back at the station.

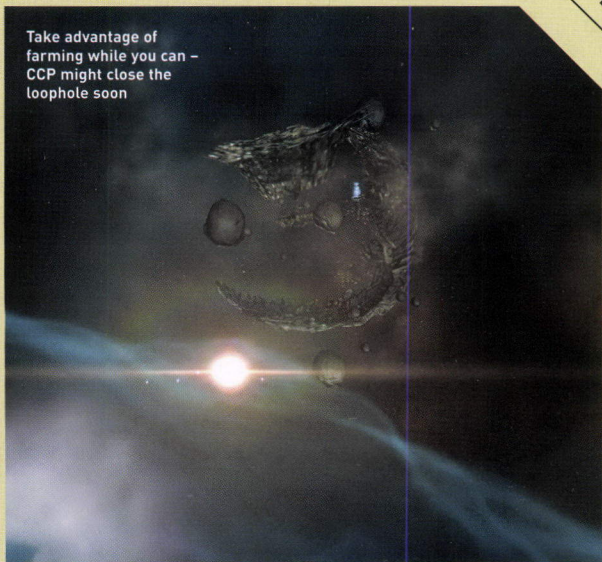
Since the revelations patch, NPCs leave a wreck behind when they're destroyed. These wrecks behave in the same way as normal player-jettisoned cans and will survive in space

The four new Tier-3 Battleships (see p48) are already proving popular among mission runners



⇒ IT'S A GOOD IDEA NOT TO SHOOT STRUCTURE OR GUN TURRETS UNLESS YOU ARE PREPARED TO TAKE ON THE WHOLE DEADSPACE AREA. ATTACKING SUCH STRUCTURES CAUSES ALL SHIPS IN THE 'ROOM' TO TARGET AND ATTACK YOU, AS DOES BUMPING INTO SOME STRUCTURES. BE CAREFUL

Take advantage of farming while you can - CCP might close the loophole soon



FARMING MISSIONS

When you complete a mission, the Journal entry changes to indicate that the mission objectives are complete. If you fail to complete a mission's objectives before the daily server downtime though, the whole mission will be reset and can be started again once the server is back up. By using this, 'farmers' progress missions up to the point where the objectives would normally be complete (such as not destroying the last ship), then leave the mission alone. They then let the mission be reset during the downtime so they can run it again the next day, again without finishing it. This loses any mission bonus rewards and greatly limits your LP earning potential with the Agent, but you are effectively guaranteed to be able to run a specific mission once a day for seven days. Some argue that farming should be limited or removed but it is not considered an exploit in any way.



for up to two hours before imploding. After the loot is removed, however, the wreck doesn't implode automatically as it can then be salvaged for special components to build the new 'rigs'. The wreck 'lifetime' is not affected by closing the mission, which means that they will remain in space once you have told an agent that you have completed the work. When you close a mission, the structures and any remaining NPCs will vanish, but the wrecks will remain out there.

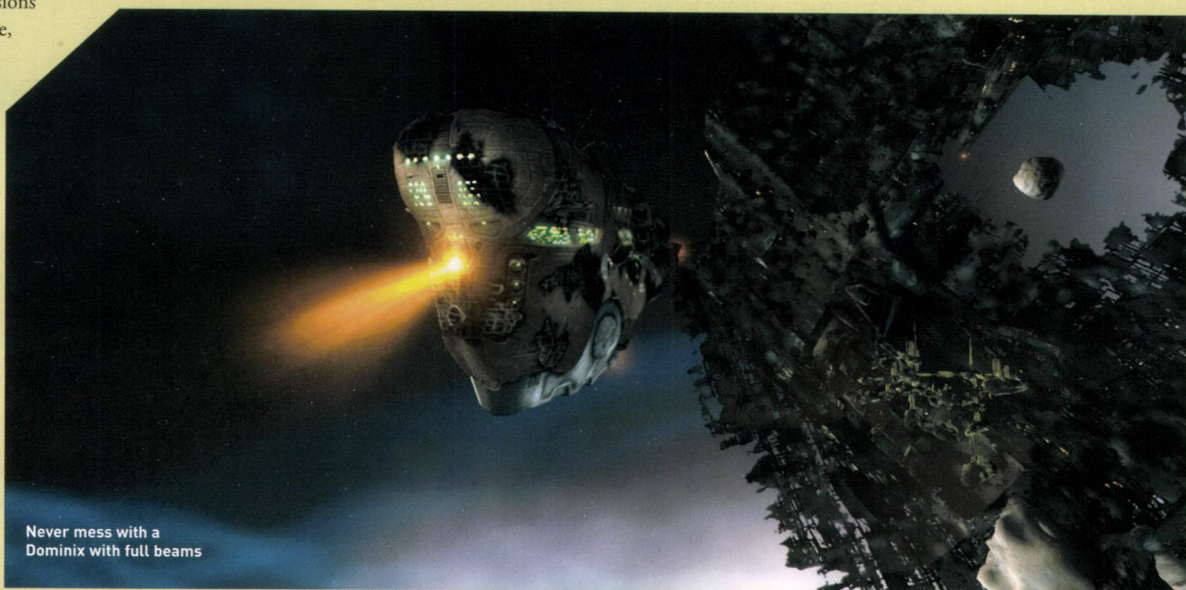
Some missions require you to deliver certain items that are dropped from the mission NPCs to the agent. Even if you are not collecting all loot drops, you will still need to locate the relevant wreck containing the mission objective. In missions where there are many drops, it can be a little tricky picking out the right one.

There are a small number of missions that may spawn a pirate faction as part of the target ships. These rare spawns will reward you with higher bounties than others and may also drop valuable faction equipment. These spawns have been confirmed on the level 4 missions Worlds Collide, The Blockade, and Gone Berserk.

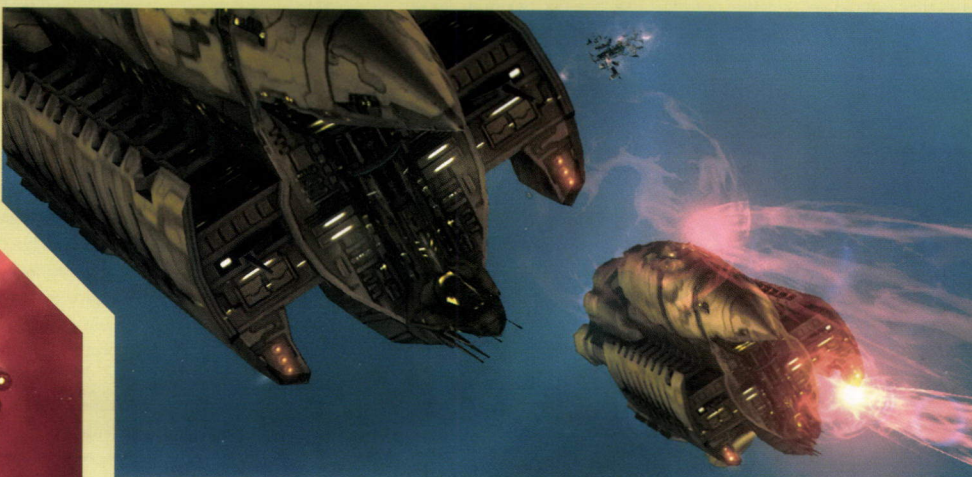
PICK-UP TRUCK

A common tactic for collecting loot is to use a tractor beam during missions to pull a jettisoned cargo container behind you as a trailer. When you open a wreck, you can move the contents to the trailer without filling up your own hold. When you have collected everything, you bookmark the location of the trailer can, close the mission and return to the can in a ship with sufficient cargo space to transport all the items. This can work very well in missions located near stations or gates, where you may want to ensure you get to keep all the best loot.

Another common alternative is to not bother collecting loot until all the NPCs are killed. Instead, you bookmark each area of space where wrecks are located and return in a specific loot-collection ship, fitted for speed and cargo space and with tractor beams to ease the collection. One of the most popular ships for this is the Gallente Exequeror Cruiser. It can fit four tractor beams, an afterburner, MWD, and hold more ☺



Never mess with a Dominix with full beams



left: possibly not the most versatile combination, but a brace of Abaddons sure does look intimidating



KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Obviously, you can attempt any mission with any ship you wish, but as a general guideline the following ships are most popular for the following level of Kill type missions:

Mission Level	Primary Ship	Alternate Ships
Level 1	Frigate	Destroyer
Level 2	Cruiser	Assault Frigate
Level 3	Battlecruiser	Heavy Assault Cruiser / Battleship
Level 4	Battleship	Command Ship / Battlecruiser / Heavy Assault Cruiser

MISSION MINING

Most encounter missions will have asteroids present as part of the scenery. These are regular asteroids and can be mined as if you were in a belt. For the most part you will only have Veldspar or other low-end ore, but some missions spawn large Omber, Gniess or similar-quality rocks, even in high security Empire space. It can be profitable to mine these, especially as you are likely to be the only miner present and the possibility of ore theft is very low. Further, it will be difficult for pirates or war targets to find you if you're in a mission rather than a belt, giving a certain level of security.

A lot of mission miners also use the fact that missions reset at downtime (see *Farming Missions*, page 60) to their advantage, allowing them to mine a good asteroid spawn every day in a week as the asteroids respawn fully with each downtime. If you do this, remember to clear out the rats first before bringing in your barge, as they will respawn at downtime just like the 'roids! You don't want your expensive barge and strip miners to pop before you get a chance to use them.

If you remain mining for long enough, there's a strong chance that NPC pirates will come and have a sniff around. You will get spawns of the same type as you would in that system's asteroid belts. Therefore, if you are mining you should always be prepared to deal with NPCs, even in missions. An interesting side effect of this is that you have a chance of a rare Faction spawn in these missions, leading to better rewards and more interesting loot (as well as the Faction standing bonuses)!

⊕ than 1000m³ of loot with the right skills trained and cargo expanders fitted.

A happy medium that some mission runners prefer is to ignore Frigate and Cruiser drops and concentrate on Battlecruiser, elite ship and Battleship drops. Again, when you pop one of these ships, tag the wreck to identify it as a wreck of interest to allow you to differentiate it from all other drops.

Some of the structures in deadspace encounter missions also drop loot. These drops range from standard trade goods through to rare implants and skillbooks. Not every structure in a complex will drop loot, so it's best to do some research beforehand to know which, if any, structures to destroy.

It's also worth noting that when destroying structures, using drones rather than missiles or turrets is generally preferred as they expend no ammo – in many circumstances the value of loot dropped from structures is worth less than the ammo spent destroying them.

Unfortunately, ship and cargo scanners do not work on structures, so you only get to figure out which of them drop items through trial and error or checking on common mission note sites. The situation is different for NPCs, however, where you can use a ship scanner to check what they will drop once they are destroyed.

So now you have collected all that lovely loot, what do you do with it? Many players keep the items they use on a regular basis (guns, launchers, ammo, drones, etc.) and sell the high-end named items. The rest are reprocessed, with the resulting minerals either sold or used to build more ships and ammo.

GROUPS

It can be fun to do missions in groups, and while not ideal PvP practice, it can be good training for squad leaders and is an easy way to try some group tactics. With the current game mechanics, mission rewards are not shared equally amongst all players participating in group activities. Mission bounties will be shared with all gang members on the same grid, but mission rewards and LPs are awarded to the mission owner alone.

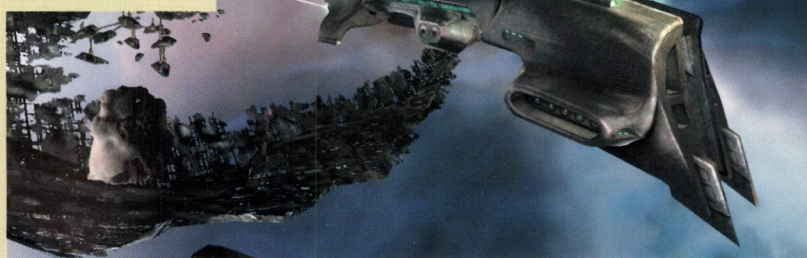
Common setups for groups include a dedicated tanker, a logistics/remote repair support ship and a dedicated damage dealer. By sending in the tank first and having them

Elite vessels and Battleships are where you'll find the most lucrative loot drops

➡ **WHEN DESTROYING STRUCTURES, USING DRONES RATHER THAN MISSILES OR TURRETS IS PREFERRED AS THEY EXPEND NO AMMO. IN MANY CIRCUMSTANCES THE VALUE OF LOOT FROM STRUCTURES IS WORTH LESS THAN THE AMMO SPENT DESTROYING THEM**



Some players are hoarders and collect everything they see, but this route is not the most effective use of your time in EVE



attack the spawns, you can protect the other ships and complete missions quicker.

A word of caution, however. The presence of a second player entity (either a ship or drone) in certain missions can cause the whole deadspace pocket to attack the players. You may be able to last out the damage, but in many circumstances this could be too much for an average tank. Worlds Collide and the first area of Angel Extravaganza are well known for aggro problems. Also, if there are mission respawns, these tend to target the weakest ship present. It is best, therefore, to try and ensure the tank receives all aggression to protect the supporting players.

GENERAL HINTS

Training the relevant social skills as soon as you can is a must for serious mission runners. Following this, probably the next most important thing to do is find a good area to work in, preferably one where there are several agents available to you. This way, even if you have to turn down missions for one agent, there will still be alternatives available to you.

It should be noted that encounter missions are always located within the same constellation as the agent offering the mission, and that courier missions can take you anywhere up to eight jumps away, including pickups and deliveries in different regions.

As with PvP,
it's all about
being prepared
and supporting
your buddies

FACTION DAMAGE TYPES

Probably the most important factor in deciding how to equip your ship for mission combat is the force you will be facing. Not only do different Factions deal different damage types, they are also vulnerable to different types of damage:

FACTION	TANK AGAINST	DAMAGE TO DEAL	NOTES
Amarr Empire	EM, Thermal	Thermal	
Angel Cartel	Explosive, Kinetic, Thermal, EM	Explosive	Thermal and EM damage can be low for most spawns, but high in others
Caldari State	Kinetic, Thermal	Kinetic	
Equilibrium of Mankind (EoM)	Kinetic, Thermal	Kinetic	
Gallente Federation	Thermal, Kinetic	Thermal	Also small amounts of EM
Guristas Pirates	Kinetic, Thermal	Kinetic	Also small amounts of EM
Khanid Kingdom	EM, Thermal	Thermal	
Mercenaries	EM, Thermal, Kinetic, Explosive	Thermal	There is no clear damage type, rather all damage types are dealt
Minmatar Republic	Explosive, Thermal, Kinetic, EM	Thermal	There is no clear damage type, rather all damage types are dealt
Mordu's Legion Command	Thermal, Kinetic	Kinetic	
Rouge Drones	Kinetic, Thermal, Explosive, EM	EM	There is no clear damage type, rather all damage types are dealt
Sansha's Nation	EM, Thermal	EM	
Serpentis	Thermal, Kinetic	Thermal	
The Blood Raider Covenant	EM, Thermal	EM	
Thukker Tribe	Explosive, Thermal	Thermal	



When running courier missions, try and find an area spread over a number of systems with several courier-type agents. You will find that you will get asked to make deliveries to systems where another of your agents resides, so that on completion of your mission you are already in a location to request another. This means you can usually travel without an empty hold, maximizing your per-trip profits.

Some missions require goods or items to be present at a given station. As you can speak with an agent and complete a mission from any station, this means that you do not have to actually be with the goods when finishing the mission. This can be useful for courier missions as you can have an alt, corp mate or player-crafted courier mission deliver the item to the destination station and allow you to complete the mission without leaving the comfort of your station.

In a similar vein, for those courier missions that require you to move general market items around, if those items are being sold at the destination station you can buy them off the market and complete the mission without actually moving any goods anywhere. This can't be done with specific named items such as sealed cargo containers, however.


It is worth having a look at the system scanner window when you're in deadspace missions to see where you are on the map.

Most missions are randomly located in a solar system and some of the locations can prove to be ideal safe spots located way off the normal travel routes.

COMBAT MISSION HINTS

If you lose your own ship during a mission and you feel you will be unable to complete the rest of it, bookmark the location of the remains of your gear before cancelling the mission. NPCs do not attack pods, so resist the urge to warp away as soon as your ship is destroyed, but rather take a second or two to bookmark the location before returning to the nearest station. Due to can persistence, your surviving equipment will remain in your can at the location, even after the mission has been cancelled and gone.

Finally, always be wary when running missions after patches and extended daily downtimes as they can change. The devs like to keep the mission runners on their toes and make life more exciting (or nerf mission rewards, depending on your point of view).

Agent missions represent only a small fraction of what EVE has to offer, but they are something that almost every player will do from time to time. With the right fittings and forearmed with good information about what to expect, you can survive and complete even the most challenging that come your way. 

ONLINE RESOURCES

There are many online resources and fan sites that will help you with your mission running. Sites like EVE-Info (<http://eveinfo.com>) and Chepe Nolon's Mission Pages (<http://tinyurl.com/yefl3z>) contain details of mission contents, the enemies to expect, what damage to tank and deal and what structures to pop. Sometimes there are also detailed descriptions of how best to complete the missions or how to just blitz through them in the quickest time.

Other sites, such as elFarto's NPC Database (<http://npc.elfarto.com/index.php>), have lots of detailed information on pirate ships, the damage they do, the shield and armour resistances they have and a whole host of other relevant info, including details of those ships that web or warp scramble.

The final set of online resources are the mission forum pages (www.eve-online.com/ingameboard.asp) and the in-game mission and level 4 channels ('Mission' and 'LVL4' respectively). Feel free to ask your questions in either of these and you should get answers pretty quickly.

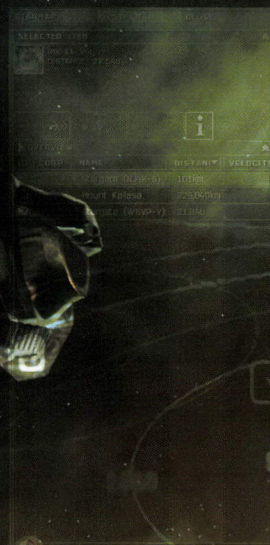


INSIDER'S GUIDE

EVERYTHING A PLAYER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT...



SCANNER		
SYSTEM SCANNER	DIRECTIONAL SCAN	MOON ANALYSIS
USE OVERVIEW SETTINGS		
Range (km)	Angle	360.00
1450,000.00		
SCAN		
NAME	TYPE	DIST.
Hoshi's Maelstrom	Maelstrom	-
Kanaka Maui's Mammoth	Mammoth	-
Tial'C's Minimatar Shuttle	Minimatar Shuttle	-
Stargate (N4X-S)	Stargate (Gallente 3)	101km



YOU ARE HERE



To do this to ships, you need to find them first

Cruiser-class recon ships are well suited to scouting ahead of large fleets



THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO SHIP PROBING

THE REVELATIONS PATCH HAS BROUGHT MANY NEW THINGS, AMONG THEM SHINY NEW SHIPS AND THEIR WRECKS. BUT WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO YOU TO FIT OUT THAT NEW BATTLECRUISER IF YOUR TARGET RUNS TO A SAFESPOT AS SOON AS YOU ENTER THE SYSTEM? FEAR NOT, BECAUSE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE FROM THIS GUIDE THAT SPOT WON'T BE 'SAFE' FOR LONG



TEXT: HOSHI

So accomplished is Hoshi in the art of probing, she once found the ship that abducted Elvis Presley before it had 'connection issues' and logged off

For as long as I have played EVE, there have been scan probes. Until recently, they were one of the most complicated and arcane systems ever seen in a computer game. Even the most seasoned scanners were seen with their fingers crossed, praying to the god of probes for their scans to be successful. Spending hours probing a deep safespot, only to finally get in range for that last scan and see the target warp away laughing, was a daily occurrence.

Even though the probe god didn't hear our prayers, the developers at CCP have. With the Revelations patch, in addition to the high-profile stuff like new ships, rigs, contracts, etc, it has also included a totally new probe system – a system that anyone should, with a little effort (and this guide), be able to master.

RIGHT TOOLS, RIGHT SHIP

Before we can start probing, we are going to need a few things. First, we need a probe launcher, of which there are currently two different types available – the Scan Probe Launcher and the Recon Probe Launcher.

The Scan Probe Launcher, a long-time work-horse for all old scan probes, has now been relegated to be used for Moon Surveying and Exploration. While it can still be used to scan for ships, it's very inefficient in that role. It takes five times longer to find the target than the Recon Probe Launcher.

You should replace your Scan Probe Launcher with a brand new Recon model as

quickly as possible. Despite the name, it is not limited to use on recon ships. Any ship with 220 CPU and a free high slot can fit one. Note though, that you can never fit two probe launchers on the same ship.

Now that we have a Probe Launcher picked out, we need a ship to fit it on. While any ship can be used for probing, there are some that will work much better than the rest. Your main ship of choice should be a Covert Ops Frigate which is fairly skill-intensive but has two important features that makes it, without contest, the best ship for the job.

The first is a 10 per cent reduction to scan time per level of your Covert Ops skill (this means that with level 5, the time taken to find the target will be cut in half). The second is the ability to fit a Covert Ops Cloaking Device II, which allows you to warp while cloaked. This is vital as it's not always possible to warp in right on top of the target, meaning you will have to approach the target manually – and most people will not sit still waiting for you if they see you coming for them.

If you don't have a Covert Ops Frigate, there are a few other ships that can also serve reasonably well. The Force Recon ships are your second best bet. They also have the ability to fit the Covert Ops cloak but get no bonus to scan time. There is also a group of T1 Frigates that get a scan time bonus. While

they will probably make a nice platform for exploration, I would not recommend them for ship probing unless the target is obviously away from his keyboard. They have neither the ability to fit a Covert Ops cloak, nor the speed or survivability to hold the target down until support arrives.

CHOOSING PROBES

So, we have our Probe Launcher picked and fitted to our ship; the final thing we need are probes. There are a total of 25 different varieties of probe in EVE, but only five can be fitted into the Recon Probe Launcher – the

The new in-system view complements the scan interface



Don't forget to fit a probe launcher – they're quite useful for launching probes



Others are for moon surveying or exploration. The five probes you want to use are the Snoop, Fathom, Spook, Ferret and Observer probes. What make these different from each other are their ranges, sensor strengths and accuracy.

A shorter-range probe like the Snoop has much higher sensor strength and accuracy than a longer-range probe like the Ferret. The longer-range probes also have longer flight time, which means that you can scan several times with them before they time out. As a scanner, you should carry several of each type. Ten to 20 of each type, plus a few extra of the shortest and longest range, should be enough, but as the probes are very small it will not be your cargo bay but your wallet that limits how many you can carry. Losing a Covert Ops Frigate full of probes can be quite expensive.

Before we start dropping our probes, we should try to get at least a rough picture of where in the system our target is located. To do this, we can make use of the Directional Scanner. Press Ctrl+F11 or click the radar button on your HUD next to the shield/armour dial to open it. This window has three tabs: the first is for your probes, the second is the Directional Scanner and the third is for moon surveying.

The Directional Scanner has two relevant options; you can limit it to show only the things you have set your overview to show, or you can have it show everything it can find. With the Revelations patch, the list of things the scanner will pick up has been limited to only

include things related to finding and avoiding other players. This makes the view much less cluttered, especially in the 'show everything' mode. Some objects, like probes, will only show up if set to 'show everything' as there is no option to display them on your overview.

NARROWING THE SEARCH

In order to narrow down the search for our target, we need to find roughly where they are in the system using the directional scanner, adjusting the range and angle. The range is defined in kilometres, the maximum being 2,147,483,647 km (approximately 14.35 AU). If you input a value higher than this it will automatically reset to this value. If the target is more than 14.35 AU away, you will not be able to see them on your scanner.

Angle is defined in degrees; 360 means all around in every direction, while 90 is roughly the same as your viewing angle. The direction of the scan is centred on where your camera is pointing; you can see both the direction of the camera and the span of your scan by clicking F11 and looking at the top-down solar system view. By pointing the camera towards a planet or belt, and lowering the angle to five or 15, you can make sure you will only pick up things that are either in this belt or in the direction of this belt.

It can take some time before you become fast and accurate with the Directional Scanner, but once you master it, you'll find it a powerful tool in your arsenal for finding other players. Why bother with probes and chance

➡ IT CAN TAKE SOME TIME BEFORE YOU BECOME FAST AND ACCURATE WITH THE DIRECTIONAL SCANNER, BUT ONCE YOU MASTER IT, YOU'LL FIND IT A POWERFUL TOOL IN YOUR ARSENAL FOR FINDING OTHER PLAYERS

Those Lachesises are hawt!
(Or should that be Lachesi?)



being discovered, when you can find out that the target is sitting at a specific moon just by using the Directional Scanner?

LOCATING YOUR FIRST TARGET

Now it's time to give hunting a try. The first thing you should do is open up the Directional Scanner and warp around the system a bit to see if you can locate your target's approximate position. If you can find him on the scanner and narrow the angle down a bit, you can see what objects in the system are close to him. Once you have his rough position, launch the appropriate scan probe. If he is 10-15 AU away, use a Spook probe, if he is 5-10 AU use the Fathom probe, and if he is less than five AU away, use the Snoop probe.

If you can't find him at all on your scanner, he is either cloaked or in a 'deep safespot'. If he is cloaked, you will just have to give up for the time being because it's not possible to find cloaked ships with probes (this was promised but did not come with the Revelations patch).

A deep safespot is a point in space that is more than 15 AU away from any object in the system, making it impossible to get close enough to see him on a scanner without the use of probes. To find a deep safespot, you will need to use either Ferret or Observer probes, depending on how deep it is, as these are the only probes with ranges exceeding 15 AU.

MY FIRST SCAN PROBE

To scan for ships, load up the correct probe, launch it, and open up your scanner (Ctrl+F11). Choose the first tab (System Scanner), select your probe here, and select at least the 'Ship' group from the list above. You can scan for more than one group simultaneously, but we will only scan for ships right now. The level of your Astrometrics skill determines how many groups you can select at one time and there is no penalty for using more than one group, so if it is helpful to do so, go ahead and select as many as you can/want. For the time being, we'll just scan for ships so as not to clutter up the results list with irrelevant data.

Once you have made your selection, click the Analyze button at the bottom of the window to initiate the scan. A timer will appear counting down until the scan is finished. If you have a cloak you can activate it now – just make sure you are not within 2km of the probe or it will decloak you. It's important that you do not warp away during the scan or close the scanner window. Doing so will abort the scan and you may still have to wait until it's finished before you can start a new one. If a probe times out before the scan finishes, the scan will also fail. It's important to keep track of how long is left on them (as seen in the scan window) and how long a scan takes for you to complete.

When the scan is finished, you will get a list of all the things the probe picked up. The list includes the ship/object type, signal strength, distance and accuracy. The type is the name of the ship type, such as 'Raven' or 'Thorax'. You will have to determine yourself which results belong to your enemy and which belong to your friends.

Signal Strength is the percentage chance that the target had to appear on your scan. For example, if the signal strength is 1.0 it means there was a 100 per cent chance that it will show up on your scan, or if the signal strength is 0.5, it means there was a 50 per cent chance it would show up. This means that you might have to repeat your scan several times before the ship you are searching for is picked up on it, especially if you are using the weaker, long-range probes. Signal Strength is a factor of the sensor strength of the probe you are using, the 'signal size' of the target, the distance between the probe and the target, and any skills you might have. Base sensor strength of probes is listed in their attributes. The 'signal size' is a factor based on the target's sensor strength and signature radius, calculated simply like this:

Target Signal Size = $\frac{\text{Target Signature Radius}}{\text{Target Sensor Strength}}$

This means that the smaller your target's signature radius and the larger his sensor strength, the harder he will be to find with probes. A target with several shield extenders will have larger signature radius and be easier to find, while a target with ECCM will have higher sensor strength and will be harder to find.

The final data shown in the scan window are 'distance' and 'accuracy'. Distance is simply the range from you to the signal you received,



Find it, lock it then take it down – just make sure you have some back up

while accuracy is the maximum deviation from the signal to the actual target. If you are using a longer-range probe with high max scan deviation, it's not certain that the scan will get you close enough to the target to actually see it. You might need to warp to this signal and drop a new stronger, shorter-range probe and scan with that before you can get on top of the target. Before you can drop a new probe, you will need to destroy the old one as the probe system no longer allows you to drop a probe within scan range of another. To destroy a probe, right-click on it in the scanner window and choose 'Destroy Probe'.

THE SYSTEM MAP

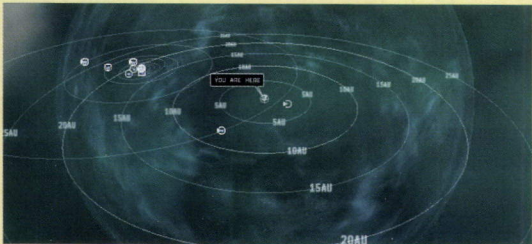
An interesting feature is the ability to view your results on the system map. Open it by clicking the zoom out button to the left of your HUD. From here you can see the sphere ranges of probes you have selected in your system scanner, and any results found since you opened the system view. If your results are not showing on the system view, you may have to click 'new scan' and then 'show results' without really starting a new scan. This should show the results on the map.

The results will show up as coloured dots on the map, over which you can hover the

SCAN PROBE STATS

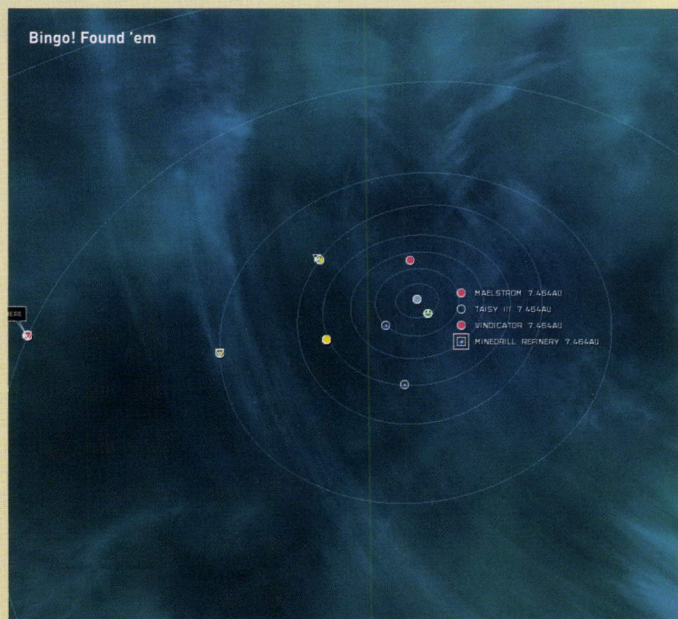
Name	Range	Strength	Max Scan Deviation	Flight Time
Observer Deep Space Probe	1000 AU	1	20,000 km	4800 sec (80 min)
Ferret Scanner Probe I	40 AU	2.5	10,000 km	2400 sec (40 min)
Spook Scanner Probe I	20 AU	5	5,000 km	1200 sec (20 min)
Fathom Scanner Probe I	10 AU	10	2,500 km	600 sec (10 min)
Snoop Scanner Probe I	5 AU	20	200 km	300 sec (5 min)

NB. Stats accurate at the time of writing.



QUICK REFERENCE DISTANCES

Knowing these distances in a snip can be very helpful for a scanner:
1 AU = 150,000,000 km
5 AU = 750,000,000 km
10 AU = 1,500,000,000 km



⊕ mouse to see the details. The colour denotes the signal strength, and thus the difficulty to find your target. At the time of writing, the colours are green for signal strengths of 0.0 to 0.4, yellow for 0.4 to 0.8, and red for higher than 0.8, though the yellow and red colours may be intended to be the other way around and this may be amended in a coming patch. You can warp to a signal by right-clicking on it in either the results list or the system map.

THE COMPLICATED STUFF

There are some advanced mathematics behind the formulas used to determine signal strength and accuracy. I will not delve too deeply into them here, especially since they're subject to possible change in the future, but I will give a rundown on what variables effect them and how you can use them to your advantage. Amendments will be made to the scan probe guide sticky in the 'Ships and Modules' forum on the EVE Online website.

Signal strength, as mentioned before, is a factor of the Sensor Strength of the probe and the Signal Size of the target. Sensor Strength of a probe is modified by skills and drops with range. If the target is half the maximum range away from the probe (such as 10 AU away from a Spook probe), its strength is cut down to 75 per cent. At three quarters of the max range, the signal strength is reduced to 55 per cent of the total, and at just under max range, signal strength is just 35 per cent of normal.

Getting as close as you can to the target before launching probes is therefore important. This means that, in practice, the probe will at best operate at 75 per cent strength or above. If the target is closer than half the range of the probe you are currently using, you should switch to a shorter-range one. Essentially, you want to use the shortest-range probe that can reach your target.

EVEN MORE COMPLICATED STUFF

The 'Signal Size' of the target is a number I made to help with probe calculations. As previously stated, it is calculated as the target ship's Signature Radius divided by its Sensor Strength. Large ships (those with a large Signal Size) will be easier to scan for, while small ships with high Sensor Strength, such as recon ships, are much harder.

There are some ships that stand out a bit from the rest – Motherships, for example, have very a large Signature Radius but also have extremely large Sensor Strength, making them no larger than a Cruiser as far as probes are concerned. Note that these numbers are not static, they can be modified by modules that change Signature Radius and Sensor Strength like shield extenders, inertia stabilizers and ECCM.

Accuracy is random but the maximum possible deviation is a factor of the Maximum Scan Deviation of the probe, any skills you have and the Signal Strength of the scan. If the Signal Strength is 1.0 or more you will always get 0m accuracy and the accuracy can never be worse than the listed max scan deviation (see *Scan Probe Stats*, page 67).



SCAN GROUPS

So what do all those groups on your system scanner actually mean? Read this handy reference:

SCAN GROUP	DESCRIPTION
Drone & Probe	If it's a mission runner you are scanning for, you should include this group as it will allow you to pick up his drones on the scan even if he doesn't show up. You can also use this to find lost drones and fighters.
Scrap	At the time of writing, this group doesn't find anything. It will probably find wrecks in the future.
Ship	The main Scan group. Will pick up all player ships, piloted or not. No NPC ships will show up.
Cosmic Signature	Exploration sites. While it is theoretically possible to find these with normal probes, it's highly unlikely.
Structures	Starbase (POS) structures.

SLIPPERY TARGETS

Not all targets let themselves be found as easily as others. Here are some tips on how to catch those squirmy ones. Mission runners are a juicy target (but are way harder to find with the 13.12.2006 hot-fix patch, as is everything inside deadspace), with some special properties in regards to scanning. First of all, they usually have drones out, which can be found with your probes. Including the 'Drone & Probe' group in your scan will increase your chances of finding them. Secondly, if they are in a deadspace area, you don't need to get a full accuracy result. Just getting within a few thousand kilometres is enough, because at that range the deadspace field will pick you up and dump you at the entrance gate.

You can use multiple probes at the same time, which will affect your scans. Using multiple probes is both a curse and a blessing. You cannot drop one probe inside the scan area of another probe, so to get them positioned right can be a hard proposition. However, if the target is in range of more than one probe, your chance of finding them is significantly increased.

There are two practical implementations of using multiple probes. One is to spread out

Not the sort of view you want to see of your ship after a long day's probing



stronger-range probes to catch people who warp around in an attempt to avoid you. Note that if you use multiple probes and the target is not in the intersection of these probes, both your signal strength and accuracy will be lower than if you just used one probe.

The other usage of multiple probes is to catch someone who is using the scanner to see when you drop them. By placing two or three Spook (20 AU) probes just outside the range of the Directional Scanner so that they intersect above the target, you will be able to get a result that is accurate enough to land you in the same grid as the target without him ever seeing you on his scanner.

This may not be easy, depending a lot on the system's layout and where the target is hiding. You will have to use the system map to see for yourself. Another way to make it less likely that your probes will be picked up on the scanner is to destroy them as soon as you get the result you want. Destruction of a probe can even be done while cloaked and in warp. Done right, and with good skills, your probes should not show up in space for more than 40 seconds at most.

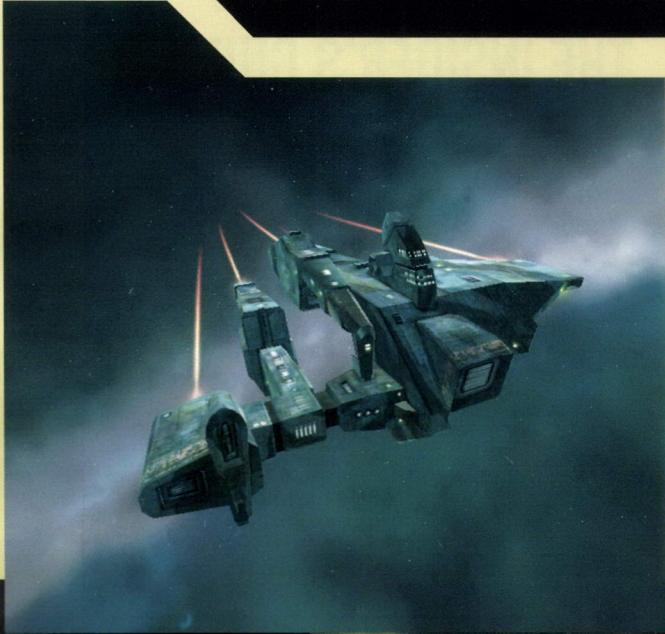
RIGGING YOUR SHIP

There is no perfect way to fit a ship for scanning, but there are a few tips for fitting out the most commonly used scanning ship – the Covert Ops Frigate.

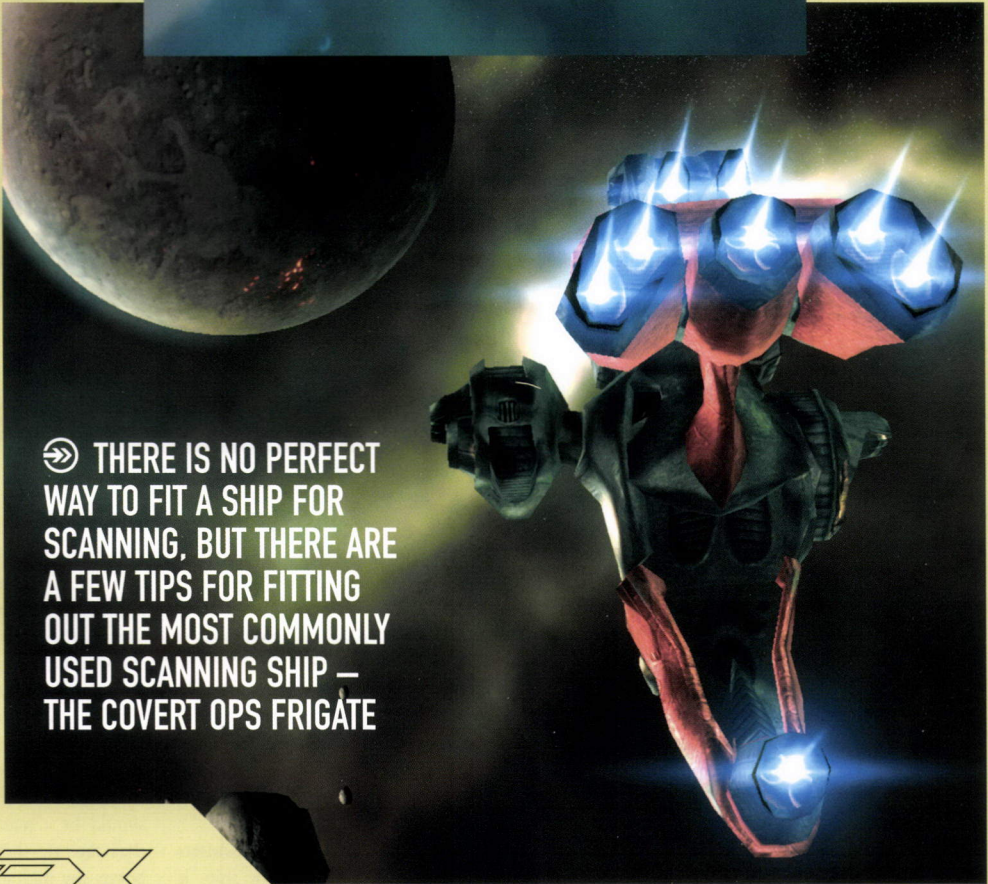
Since you don't need any guns, your high slots can be used to fit a cloak and probe launcher. If you intend to tackle your target rather than calling in backup on top of him, a warp scrambler to hold him and sensor dampners to deny him a lock until support arrives would be good to fit in your mid slots. Remaining mid slots are best fitted with a capacitor battery to enable you to run your scrambler and dampeners for longer, and to make the 100 AU or greater warps over those really large systems.

For your low slots, nanofibers are recommended. They give the best compromise between speed and agility, both of which are very important to a Covert Ops ship. Additionally, if you don't have Covert Ops level 5, you might need a co-processor in one of your low slots to fit everything. If you're lucky enough to have access to rigs, use either Auxiliary Thrusters for ship speed or Gravity Capacitor Upgrades for scan speed.

I hope you have found this guide useful. You'll be able to find much greater detail on the mathematics involved at the EVE Online forums in the 'Ships and Modules' section. This site will also be kept updated with any changes CCP makes to the probe system, so check in there often to make sure you are up to date.



Scanning is not the most exciting of EVE activities to witness, but it's a skill that has its own rewards



➡ THERE IS NO PERFECT WAY TO FIT A SHIP FOR SCANNING, BUT THERE ARE A FEW TIPS FOR FITTING OUT THE MOST COMMONLY USED SCANNING SHIP – THE COVERT OPS FRIGATE

IMPORTANT SKILLS

Afraid you may have overlooked an important skill? Below is a list of all the skills that currently affect probing. They are all located in the Science group.

NAME	EFFECT	COMMENT
Astrometrics (Rank 3)	Adds one scan group per level	Also determines which probes you can use.
Astrometric Pinpointing (Rank 5)	Reduces maximum scan deviation by 10 per cent per level	This will allow you to get closer to the target even with bad scans.
Astrometric Triangulation (Rank 5)	5 per cent scan strength bonus per level of skill	Higher strength equals higher chance to find the target and more accurate results, train before pinpointing.
Signal Acquisition (Rank 8)	10 per cent faster scanning with scan probes per level	Very important skill, should be high on your list. Level 5 cuts the scan time in half.

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO EVE: THE SECOND GENESIS CCG

PART 2

➡ A game of *EVE: The Second Genesis* normally ends when a player destroys the starbase controlled by his or her opponent. To attack or defend a starbase, however, you need ships, and although the game includes many kinds of ships, a match can be won or lost depending on exactly which you choose to include in your deck. In this article we will look at the different ships that are available, and discuss their merits, their application and their overall effectiveness when in play.

IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW YOUR SHIPS, THINK AGAIN. THE SHIPS IN THE EVE CCG MIGHT LOOK LIKE THE ONES ONLINE, BUT THEY HAVE SPECIAL ABILITIES THAT CAN TURN THE TIDE OF A GAME



TEXT: BODA KHAN

So enamoured with card games is our resident CCG freakette that she actually lives in a house of cards. Well it's more of a cardboard house, just under Waterloo Bridge. By the kebab shop

AMARR SHIPS

The Amarr Frigates demonstrate a specialty in the Patrol command, with four of its five native Frigates (and also the Impairor scout ship) possessing the command at some level. Although Patrol would suggest a defensive strategy, in practice the command has little value on a Frigate unless you are trying to draw fire away from a more important ship in the same region. Alternatively, you can play shield-boosting cards such as Stubborn Mechanic to keep the right ship alive. Patrol ships do receive a significant defensive boost from the Observatory starbase structure, or a powerful offensive boost if you select and upgrade your starbase to Empiric Tower.

Looking at individual ships, the Crucifier is useful as it can reduce the damage of the ship that targets it by combining Sensor Dampen and Patrol together. The best Amarr Frigate, however, is the Punisher which – due to its special ability – is capable of holding and defending an outer region single-handedly and indefinitely (see *The Punisher and The Guardian*, page 74).

The Amarr Cruisers, like their Frigate counterparts, largely focus on the Patrol command, although with the higher shield values the command becomes much more valuable. The Maller is a beast, with a shield value of eight and the simultaneous command of Ambush five and Patrol two – but at a cost

of 10 ISK and two turns of assembly, it is a difficult ship to play quickly or early on in the game.

Its cousin, the Omen, is also good, but is only two ISK less expensive and also takes the same amount of time to assemble. The Arbitrator and the Prophecy are interesting, but their special abilities are rather more marginal, although the former is a good way of finishing an opponent's starbase off if your fleet lacks sufficient attack power.

The best pick (and one of the best Cruisers in the game) is the Guardian logistic ship. It soaks up damage dealt to your other Patrol ships and, just like the Punisher, it can also hold an outer region by itself (see page 74).

The Amarr Battleships also have Patrol, although the Armageddon is clearly the more useful of the two ships with Patrol five, a shield value of 15 (the highest ship shield value in the game) and a damage redirecting ability similar to that of the Guardian's. However, with such high ISK costs, a three-turn assembly time, and few ways to speed up their play, it seems unlikely that either of these ships will see too many competitive games.

CALDARI SHIPS

The Caldari Frigates are more diverse in their application. Two have Ambush, two have

Patrol (all defensive options) and the Heron has an interesting combination of Warp Scramble and Target Jam (both purely offensive options). Overall they offer good value for money – e.g. the Condor, for just two ISK, has two Attack and three Defence, which is better when attacking than the Amarr Executioner or the Minmatar Burst, both of which also cost two ISK.

The Kestrel's very impressive Ambush four for only three ISK is also great, and this ship should be a mandatory choice in every deck that can use them. The Merlin, at five ISK, boasts the highest combination of Attack and Defence for a Frigate in the game (the Tristan may boast a higher Defence, but it has a lower Attack). The Ibis is also the best scout ship in the game as, should its mining ability ever cease to be useful, it can always be docked or (during a battle in your home region) withdrawn into your starbase to provide a shield bonus.

Caldari Cruisers reflect the Caldari race's particular penchant for electronic warfare ➡





⚙️ and advanced electronics. The Blackbird is extremely good when used to attack, and the Basilisk is adept at protecting another ship in your fleet (although its ability is arguably inferior to the Amarr Guardian). The Caracal has the highest Ambush rating for any cruiser in the game and its special ability is a great way of getting rid of starbase structures which are keeping your opponent's starbase alive (e.g. EMP Minefield or Juggernaut Platform).

The Moa is the most fearsome because it has such synergy with card-gaining game effects (e.g. the news card Information At A Cost), and while the two-turn assembly time of the Caldari Cruisers is somewhat daunting, Caldari players have unique access to both news cards Impending Doom and New Assembly Technique, and a further assembly boost can be provided by the special ability of the Osprey.

Both Caldari Battleships are monsters. The Raven can be warped home from any region and set on Patrol five for a cost of only one ISK, while the Scorpion automatically reduces the attack values of every enemy ship in the region. While the cost and assembly times of these ships are as high as any other Battleship in the game, there are ways for Caldari players to speed up their assembly and thus these ships are much more likely to see competitive play.

GALLENTÉ SHIPS

The Gallente Frigates are as diverse as the Caldari and, perhaps more interestingly, they provide the most ships with multiple command options. The Atron and the Tristan both come

➡️ BOTH CALDARI BATTLESHIPS ARE MONSTERS. WHILE THE COST AND ASSEMBLY TIMES ARE AS HIGH AS OTHERS IN THE GAME, CALDARI PLAYERS CAN SPEED UP THEIR ASSEMBLY SO THEY ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SEE COMPETITIVE PLAY

with Ambush and Patrol, allowing you to be more flexible in your defence options. Similarly, the Maulus has both Patrol for defence and Target Jam for offense.

Two of the Gallente cruisers – the Celestis and the Exequor – also pursue the theme of multiple command options. The Vexor is a great support ship which provides a boost to all ships on Patrol and Ambush in the region. The Oneiros is a very powerful logistic ship which increases the defence of all friendly ships in the region, and two together can hold a region just as well as a Punisher or Guardian. It should be a staple card for every Gallente military deck.

The Thorax is also very strong as it's immune to news cards and deals additional damage back to ships that damage it. In defence, when coupled with a Patrol command, you can effectively destroy a ship double its size.

The Megathron Battleship is also immune to the effects of news; however, it is not as powerful a patrol ship as the Amarr Armageddon, and it does not have any other special abilities. In contrast, while the Dominix may be slightly less powerful, its cost is reduced by one ISK for each ship you have using a Patrol command, which is a great way of bringing it out of the deck quickly and utilising it early in the game.

MINMATAR SHIPS

The Minmatar Frigates are unique in that they are the only Frigates with the Kamikaze special ability. The Breacher is perhaps the best Kamikaze Frigate, as it can inflict two damage at the start of a battle, pre-empting and destroying any Patrol, Ambush or Sensor Dampen ships controlled by your opponent. When backed with 'direct damage' news cards such as Adaster's Disaster or Remnant of Vak'Atioth, you have a simple way of removing large, threatening ships before they can respond.

Three of the five Minmatar Frigates (and also the Reaper scout ship) also have Ambush, which is arguably the cheapest and most effective defence against enemy attacks (and which is even more powerful when combined with the Surveillance Post starbase structure). The Burst with Ambush three for only two ISK is a bargain and is second only to the superior Caldari Kestrel (as noted earlier).

The Minmatar Cruisers are the most aggressive of all in the game. The Scimitar deals direct damage when assembled, and provides a bonus suited to battles where you outnumber your opponent (easily done when you play Minmatar), and the Scythe also deals direct damage when you reassemble it. You can ⚙️

MIXING & MATCHING

Each faction in the game has a certain number of native ship cards, although due to the distribution of race icons, each can in fact use more ships than just their own native vessels. In many cases, ships from different races can either complement or replace each other, depending on your exact deck strategy. The amount of choice becomes more limited as the ship size and category gets larger – logistic ships and Battleships are always for the native.

Some examples:

- An Amarr player focusing on Patrol could also play the Atron (Gallente) or the Celestis (Gallente)
- A Caldari player focusing on Sensor Dampen could also play the Crucifier (Amarr) or the Omen (Amarr)
- A Gallente player focusing on cheap, small ships could play the Executioner (Amarr) or the Condor (Caldari)
- A Minmatar player focusing on Ambush could also play the Atron (Gallente), Exequor (Gallente) or the Kestrel (Caldari).

Also note that each of the Destroyers can be played by three different races, and that the Scouts can be played by all four. Always think first about the application and the utility of your ships – their colour or racial origin should actually be a secondary concern.

THE PUNISHER AND THE GUARDIAN

The Punisher and the Guardian are ships unique in their ability to hold off an enemy fleet. They exploit the fact that (as it says on page 19 of the rulebook) 'if all the defending ships survived this battle phase, the attacking ships must withdraw'.

The Punisher works because it has a special ability; 'Punisher cannot be targeted by more than one ship during each target step'. Since it also has Patrol one, in each battle phase all it needs to do is use its command against an enemy ship with an attack value of less than five (i.e. less than its own shields) and the rest of the enemy fleet is not permitted to target or damage the Punisher. If the Punisher is your only ship in the region, this means that your opponent must withdraw after a single battle.



In this example, the Caldari player attacks an outer region controlled by an Amarr player who has a Punisher set to Patrol in that region. Neither side chooses to withdraw. In the target step, the Amarr player chooses to force the Condor to target the Punisher. As only one ship is permitted to target the Punisher at a time, the Merlin and the Ferox have no targets, and hence cause no damage in the Damage Dealing Step. The Punisher targets and destroys the Condor, while the Condor does not cause enough damage to destroy the Punisher. Since no defending ships were destroyed, the Caldari player is forced to withdraw.



The Guardian works in a similar fashion to the Punisher, except that any number of ships may target the Cruiser, but any and all damage dealt by these ships is automatically prevented.

In this example, a Gallente player attacks an outer region controlled by an Amarr player who has a Guardian situated there. Neither side chooses to withdraw. In the target step, all three Gallente ships target the Guardian and the Guardian targets the Incursus. The Guardian does not cause enough damage to destroy the Incursus, and all of the damage the attacking ships deal to the Guardian is prevented. Once again, since no defending ships were destroyed, the Gallente player is forced to withdraw.

The Guardian is immune to all damage dealt directly to it by ships. This also includes Kamikaze damage caused by Minmatar ships. However, this obviously does not apply to direct damage from sources such as the news card Adaster's Disaster.

Note, however, that the Guardian is also not immune to the damage that it redirects to itself using its own special ability – the damage is caused by the special ability and so it counts (even if the original source was an enemy ship).

⊕ distribute the Rupture's damage among any number of targets, while the Bellicose can Warp Scramble two enemy ships in each battle phase. The award for the most aggressive ship of all, however, goes to the Stabber, which deals double damage to ships (i.e. 10 or more). All are worth playing despite their cost and assembly time (the latter of which can again be alleviated with Impending Doom).

The Minmatar Battleships are also very aggressive. The Typhoon has Kamikaze eight, which is enough to destroy an un-enhanced and unprotected starbase single-handedly (which is why it costs a whopping 15 ISK, the most expensive ship in the game). The Tempest is also strong, with the highest attack value of any ship in the game, and an amazing Ambush 13 (enough to take out six of the eight Battleships in the game). Most interestingly, the cost of the Tempest is reduced for each

Kamikaze ship in your scrapheap, and when it enters play you can return one of those ships to your hand – this makes the card very easy to play, and well worth playing to boot.

OTHER SHIPS

Each of the Destroyers has an ability which is specifically detrimental to Scouts and Frigates. The Amarr Coercer is effectively the most useful as it reduces the attack of all Scouts and Frigates in a region without needing any further resource or intervention by your opponent. The Cormorant is also good, more for preventing enemy Scouts and Frigates from leaving than for its own Attack and Defence bonus (in fact, Gallente and Caldari players can play the Coercer and Cormorant together in a deadly combination).

The direct damage of the Thrasher is great, but relies on you having sufficient spare ISK ⊕



⇒ NOT ONLY DO YOU WANT TO START THE GAME WITH AT LEAST ONE SHIP IN YOUR HAND, BUT IT NEEDS TO BE A CHEAP SHIP THAT CAN BE PLAYED WITHIN YOUR FIRST FEW TURNS

SIMULTANEOUS COMMANDS

A small number of ships have simultaneous commands so that when the ship is turned sideways and multiple command tabs are shown, each tab is considered to be active simultaneously.

In the case of the Maller, you may activate its Ambush and Patrol commands simultaneously. In the case of the Badger, you may activate its Trade and Haul commands simultaneously.



to utilise it. The Catalyst is perhaps the least useful, as its special ability means little to ships already being targeted and destroyed, and it can also be obviated by just not targeting it at all.

The Battlecruisers have no specialty function but they are nevertheless worth considering together. The Minmatar Cyclone is the most aggressive, but also the most easily destroyed, while the Prophecy is more reliable but costs the most at eight ISK – and not being able to damage starbases is a very serious handicap (unless you are pursuing an alternate victory condition). The Brutix and Ferox are more interesting ships, and they support resource denial tactics – it doesn't matter so much if the ships' effects are negated when your opponent is forced to lose ISK or cards in the process.

The industrial ships are interesting in that they have so much synergy with each other. If you utilise the Amarr Bestower and Sigil ships together, you can quickly sort through your deck to bring them all into play to complement each other. Similarly, if you play the Gallente Inferior Iteron, you can search and find more Iterons (and the regular Iteron reduces the cost of each one played).

The Caldari Badger Mk. II comes into play fully assembled if you are already trading with a Badger, which in turn allows you to manipulate the top of your deck (great when combined with Market Research Lab or the Investment Bank). Finally, the Minmatar Mammoth may be the most expensive Industrial ship in the game, but it hastens the assembly of two other ships, which is an extremely useful and powerful function.


GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

We looked last issue at the probability of drawing a certain type of card from your deck at the beginning of the game. Obviously, the most important consideration for your opening draw is income-generation, but the second-most important has to be the ship cards. Not

only do you want to start the game with at least one ship in your hand, but it also needs to be a cheap ship that can be played within your first few turns. Looking not just at the raw probabilities, but also at the advice of EVE: TSG players online, the consensus seems to be somewhere between 20 and 30 ships, with at least half of these costing four ISK or less.

Remember that if you weight your deck with too many expensive ships, you will have great difficulty in playing them quickly enough. On the other hand, if you include nothing but small, cheap ships, unless you swarm and kill your opponent in the first few turns, or if he or she plays a Destroyer, a large Cruiser and/or a Battleship, you will have a vast amount of difficulty in defending your starbase effectively. Fine-tuning your deck with the right balance of ships is a delicate and difficult task and you will almost certainly need to play the game again and again before you get it right.

If you are already familiar with the game then you may disagree with some of my comments, or you may have spotted ships which are valuable in ways I have missed. Please feel free to start a discussion on this topic on the official website www.eve-ccg.com, or e-mail me through the magazine with feedback.

Of course, building a fleet and destroying your opponent's starbase is not the only way of winning. Next issue we'll take a look at alternate victory conditions, and how to build decks that attempt to achieve them. 



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We are a contract mining organisation able to fulfil your needs, in bulk and at short notice. No job too small. Contact MinerWillie in-game, join channel #rockmunch or visit www.saggyudders.com

»»» WTF????!!?

Do you keep getting killed? Are you having trouble making money in EVE? Finding it hard to keep an erection? Then you need to get in touch with ISD Services. Join the #help channel in game. Or visit your doctor.

»»» LOGIN SCREENS

If you're having problems joining corporations who require a login screen before they accept you, tell us your username and password and let us do all the hard work for you. Channel #scammersunited or visit www.nevergiveyourlogindetailstoanyone.com

MEETINGS

»»» AFTER THE SUCCESS of last year's event, we're going to have another player gathering for residents of the Pitcairn Islands. Keep an eye on the PGE channel on the EVE Communications Center for more details.

»»» LONDON, JULY '07 – E-ON AWARDS. The ultimate UK player gathering. Food, drink, friends and the small matter of finding out who rocks the most in the world of EVE. This one's real, btw

»»» OOMPAH RADIO

Tune in daily to listen to the music you love. From the polka classics of Stanky and the Coal Miners to the modern hits of the Alpine New Wave, EVE Oompah Radio brings it all to you – along with news from within EVE and chances to win special prizes

Tune in now!

www.eve-oompah-radio.com



RECRUITMENT

»»» PIRATE DRONES required for new AI corporation looking for some payback. No skillpoints required – ships and modules will be provided free. Expect to die on a regular basis. To make contact visit your nearest asteroid field and a recruitment officer will meet you shortly.

PERSONALS

»»» DESPERATELY SEEKING storm77. I'm coming to get you, you bitch – there's nowhere to hide from the wrath of Xicon!

»»» LOOKING FOR LOVE? Then do yourself a favour and turn off EVE, go to a local bar and talk to someone who you find marginally attractive. Drink beer to increase chances of mission success.

»»» DOMINEERING PIRATE corporation wanted for long-term love/hate relationship with submissive mining corp who will bend over backwards to service your needs, again and again and again. No time-wasters please. Visit our site at: www.hellopirate.com



CLASSIFIED ADS

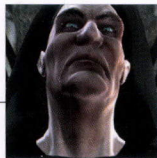
Okay, most of these are the products of a fevered imagination. However, from next issue we'll be publishing Classified Ads (15m ISK, max 50 words, logos 10m ISK). To advertise your corp, alliance, service, or to search for a long-lost buddy, email classifieds@mmmpublishing.com.

SLACKTALK

With thanks to the omgrawr.net archives... keep 'em coming



Weirdtopia > i need help in eve
Bloodspoon > ...you installed eve?
Weirdtopia > ya 14 day trial
Bloodspoon > did you uninstall WoW?
Weirdtopia > no
Bloodspoon > then i can't help ya



Remmington Daniels >
bb in 10 mins dong
needs walking
Florio > did you misspell
dog or wanking?



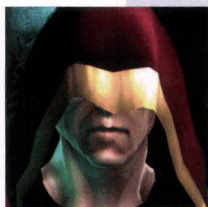
Linada > if a gamer
guy meets a gamer
girl, who cooks
dinner? :P
Samirai > pizza hut



Neckfat > great, now I'm a
mongoloid eunich
Kael Brahe > enunch?
Neckfat > whatever... the
thing that looks like a
horse, but has a horn
Kael Brahe > unicorn?
Neckfat > yeah, like Santa
has pulling his sleigh



DarQ Knight >
This is Danny's
mom I'm just
changing his
skills for him, he
will be home
around 8PM EST



anister > AW HELL NO
anister > NO NO NO NO
NO NO NO NO NO NO
anister > FUCK NO
anister > dad just
signed onto msn
anister > seems he's
changed his display
pic to a nude one of
my mum
anister > WRONG
WRONG WRONG
anister > i feel ill, afk



The Slayer > rofl
The Slayer > we just said
in alliance chat "enemy
warped off with 50%
armor" and he said in local
"more like 75%"

CounterfeitThe >
Xrak > ..
Denny Crane > ...
Helpdesk > some
very good points are
being made here



EVE A-Z

What the F-

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Pertaining to the EVE website these were questions that were asked and promptly answered back in a century when multiplayer gaming required a couple of tin cans and piece of string.

Fanfest

A yearly gathering of the EVE faithful, who come together in Iceland to celebrate EVE and try to lose as much money as possible on merchandise and over-expensive alcohol products. For the hardcore, Fanfest is an opportunity to bow down before the mighty Oveur and momentarily question their sexuality.

Fangs

Elongated canine teeth (or in this case, lupine - caius lupis if you want to be pedantic) that since the merger with White Wolf are required apparel for CCP employees, as is the consumption of virginal blood, the appreciation of bands like CruXshadow and Xymox and daily showings of Reynir's 'Evil Evil' Fanfest sermon. It's a Vampire thing.

Fedo

A creature created long ago in the backstory of the game as a kind of organic vacuum cleaner to keep ships clean and tidy. It was soon realized that EVE players are quite happy to live in their own cradle of filth and depravity, and the creature almost became extinct, until they were found alive and well in a recent Chronicle. It is hoped they will be available in the EVE Store soon.

Female

56% of EVE avatars are female and 3% of players. You do the math.

FFS

One of many acronyms used to embellish in-game conversation. In this case the speaker is a little put out by something that has happened to him. For example, 'ffs pwned. i am the suxorixorage.', which translates as 'oh dear, I've been defeated and therefore am not a very accomplished EVE player.'

Forum

An online meeting place frequented by those who, during the day, are unlucky enough to be at a place of work or study, embittered that they are unable to connect to EVE on pain of expulsion. The forums are like an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, only without the hope of ever kicking the habit.

Frigate

The EVE equivalent of a diaper or nappy - in the sense that most people like to get out of it as soon as possible.

COMING IN EON #007...

IT'S THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN THE GALAXY!
WE BRING YOU THE FULL LIST OF NOMINEES FOR THE E-ON
AWARDS. BEST PILOT! BEST CORP! BEST CEO! DISCOVER
WHO'S IN THE RUNNING TO PICK UP THE MOST SOUGHT-
AFTER TROPHIES SINCE THE OSCARS, AND FIND OUT WHY
JULY 7 WILL BE A STAR-FILLED NIGHT TO REMEMBER!

H A P P Y N E W Y E A R





MEET THEM ...



WWW.EVE-PIRATE.COM

... BEFORE THEY MEET YOU